# AMERICAN NATURISTS

HENRY CHESTER TRACY

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# AMERICAN NATURISTS

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# AMERICAN NATURISTS

BY

HENRY CHESTER TRACY

*Author of*

"TOWARDS THE OPEN," "ENGLISH AS EXPERIENCE,"
"THE SHADOW EROS," ETC.

NEW YORK

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First Edition

NATURE THOUGHT

"I have heard no bad news."

—Henry Thoreau.

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# AMERICAN NATURISTS

# INTRODUCTORY

## I

## AMERICAN NATURE MEN

WE might put just a little stress on "American," for they were that. Nature made them so—American wild nature. I am thinking of those who made our nature literature what it is, the peer of any literature of its kind. They borrowed nothing from Europe. Unlike Irving and Longfellow they did not acquire their culture abroad or lean on a tradition in belles-lettres. Or, if in an amateurish piece they did so, that leaning produced the weakest spots in their fabric; as when Thoreau, in the "Week," interrupts his perfectly fresh and vigorous impressions of things on the Concord or the Merrimac river to quote Antigone or allude to Zoroaster. They were American in this peculiar genius and expression, even when, like Wilson, they were immigrants. This land made them, taught them and brought an original vein that, but for its stimulus might have remained dormant. It was their spur, their powerful awakener; and it would be, to all persons capable of responding, granted these found some means of expression. But the world at large has been slow to credit

us with any original mode of expression in literature. Edgar Poe and Mark Twain are still the two outstanding figures, in the world's estimation, and our literature of nature is still (as such) unknown there, although "Walden" has at times served as an English workingman's Bible.

We cannot blame Europe. We have not recognized our own nature literature as distinctive and fine. We have not understood its unique character or seen our naturists as a group distinct in kind from "essayists" on the one hand, and men of science on the other. Even now, when their work is at a high point of actual and enduring achievement, our libraries find for it no specific place (scattering it variously among the four departments of Natural Science, History, Sport and Literature) and our book-seller's manuals may class it as "Nature Study." So far as the author is aware this present book is the first attempt to group together, and to distinguish from other superficially similar writings, the work of our nature men and women. But not in an encyclopedic manner. He has not attempted to include and appraise all of them.

To illustrate: Audubon was not a scientist, although he is included in Henry Holt's excellent publication, "American Men of Science." It is true that after he had met the Scotch ornithologist, McGillivray, and had had his help in making systematic and accurate his presentations of birds of North America, he gained from him some knowledge of internal and skeletal anatomy

and its importance for classification—used and respected that knowledge. But he was at heart a naturist, that is an ardent lover and observer of the life out-of-doors, wholly and somewhat naïvely responsive to its lures, unhappy if long deprived of its contacts. This detracts somewhat from his standing among men of science, who find more to approve of in Louis Agassiz. But Agassiz does not fit into our picture. Again, Asa Gray started out in his study of plants with all the ardor that fired our early naturists, and produced, among other books, his famous "Manual of the Botany of the Northern United States." First published in 1847 it has passed through many editions and (in a revised form) is still in active service; but it does not belong to this new literature. Both Agassiz and Gray were ardent and humane men . . . of science.

Theodore Roosevelt was one of the first of our public men to recognize this new nature literature, and his clear appreciation of its character and worth, as shown in an introduction to a book of William Beebe's marks him as an ally, if not an important contributor. And, beyond any product of his own pen he stood for an attitude toward our wild life of the forest and plains which seems characteristically American. In his boyish, boisterous way he was very much of a nature man, leaving a permanent impression. His influence is strong for conservation, for effective policies, for translating a zest for adventurous life out-of-doors into homes for forest trees and for the wild life that

belongs there. So this impetuous rough rider and reformer and man bursts into my naturist's scheme and cannot well be ousted. He assorts oddly with that grave reflective essayist, Bailey, whose "Background Books" gave us the name "naturist" and defined it, with a quietist leaning. Men of peace, these men are, but some, like W. T. Hornaday, will die fighting . . . for a world called "nature," and its preservation. Without their active aid the work of our finest writers might be futile. And this is why we cannot be content to form a new literary cult based on critical values alone and exclude from it all who fail to qualify. We would rather single out for recognition some whose work is representative, or prophetic or far-reaching in its effects even though as writing it lacks special distinction. But this writing must be judged by the flow it carries and the purpose it fulfills, as well as by aesthetic standards.

Here let Carl Akeley typify a great naturist's heart hidden under the disguise of a taxidermist and sculptor. Andrews is a field expert extending the boundaries of our nature sense into past horizons—headman and popularizer of explorations whose driving power is science. Forbush may represent the collective interest of the Audubon Societies in the States, Eaton an interpreter to the Scouts, and Seton an inspirer of the Woodcraft people. Chapman is here as patron and prime mover, in the Eastern States, of a wide unorganized urge toward bird-study and the humanizing

of museums. Dawson is a free-lance prophet and interpreter for the Pacific West, whose work came to its peak in the monumental "Birds of California," a unique work, unlike anything else that has ever been done, as the man himself was unlike other persons.

These men hold a peculiar place in the American scene. In a sense they are popularizers. This does not mean that they belittle their theme or drag it down to a popular level. Every one of them has known the worth of accurate intelligent observation, of systematic records, of all that contributes to authentic science. But they have known something more to convey than is known to "pure science." This *something more* is what determines their special rôle, which it is the province of the present volume to appreciate.

I cannot close this very brief critique of our nature prose without referring to some other closely allied writing. Dallas Lore Sharp has contributed from time to time excellent nature essays to the magazine that made Burroughs an author. And now Henry Beston brings to the same monthly a pen that falls in no way short of the great tradition, embroidering night as an aspect of nature. John C. Merriam, after a long record as geological expert, university dean, and now head of a Carnegie Institute surprises us with a fine interpretive vein in certain essays that have appeared in *Scribner's*. I should like, some time, to consider this and similar work under the title of "Nature and Reality." In such a treatment there would be a strong

philosophical tinge, which is excluded from my immediate undertaking; and in it justice could be done to Henry Fairfield Osborn whose wide view and whose vision of the "spirit of man" exceed the scope of this volume. But he is a world-naturist, and we were speaking of nature men who are American.

The nature men have not given us new word-sets. They have used words in a new way. That is why their writings are important as literature. This cannot be equally true of all of them. It is unquestionably true of those of them who cultivated the gift.

As happened in England, some of our nature writers have taken first rank. What is claimed there for W. H. Hudson can here be claimed for Thoreau. Among living writers William Beebe has no serious competitor in his special vein of science presented as belles-lettres. For grave prophetic touches, Liberty H. Bailey is unique. The dominant tone, however, is one of directness and simplicity; and in respect to these qualities none of our nature men here included lack strength.

Our list has aimed to be representative. A complete list would be encyclopedic. Besides the men of science whose occasional contributions to our literature might bring them properly into the field of these sketches, there are popular lecturers, photographers, artists and essays we might like to include. No two authorities would agree on the most representative list. We must hope therefore that those whose admiration turns

toward some person not described in these pages will not resent an omission that implies no reflection on such a person's achievements.

Of the men chosen to represent "our own time," William T. Hornaday is the veteran campaigner who links us with an age of pioneer effort in conservation. He still lives. Roosevelt as a national figure stands for the high point of Presidential interest in the cause of wild life and forest preservation. Carl Akeley's work and influence will live and merge with the coming enlightenment for which he worked and for which he died, a nature hero. The work of a Forbush is quiet, that of an Andrews spectacular. Both are needed in the interest of respect for the world panorama. Dawson left us prematurely, but his work speaks for him. His ebullient joy in bird-life, his skill and taste in presentation of the lore will win him friends for another generation. Frank Chapman's place is plain. We but confirm the public's recognition. To Walter Prichard Eaton we may be adding a little lustre where his other eminence has caused a relative shading. And to Dr. Bailey we gladly concede a forward look not always found in the work of younger writers; for the quality of seership is not gained by close observation—it is a gift of ripe years on a stem of sensitive mind and with a root in early experience. The author of the "Background" series of books has both the gift and the qualifications.

There is a philosophy of nature that seems to emerge from a reading of these authors. It is kindly

and human. It is warm and generous to all life, unwilling to deny space and breath to lesser beasts, chary of "using" them for our selfish advantage. We hesitate to define it in formal language. To expand it would require a volume, but to live it requires only a gesture. Carl Akeley, after having studied and photographed a graceful klipspringer from a blind near its refuge would not take the animal for his collection. That was such a gesture. He had established a relation with the most marvellous of the springing antelope and would not violate it. That is the philosophy we speak of, in terms of action, and of attitude. It is less a sentiment than a perception.

Perception is the first gift of the nature men. Their lives are spent—as this book is written—to enrich it. In nothing does the poverty of a great nation show so quickly than in the opacity of its market minds to the values we name as "nature." In nothing does the judgment of those minds err so far as when they attribute our appreciation of those values to a softness of sentiment. But since they do, we must oppose the natural mind to the utilitarian mind and stand with those whom Bailey has termed "Naturists," against all forms of ruthless exploitation and for the conservation of whatever is worth keeping of our earth and its native population—beasts, birds and their backgrounds—wild nature.

## II

## OF WOMEN AS NATURISTS

MANY of those who read these sketches and interpretations will be women. Those of them who are acquainted with the author will know that he has not the slightest bias in favor of men as nature-writers, and that he has taken the leading figures as they come, selecting those who seem to have made the most distinctive contributions and the most lasting impression on our feeling for out-of-door things. Yet his list includes twenty-one major contributors, of whom only two are women. Why is this?

The question was first put to the author by a brilliant woman who agrees, in the main, with the selections, and was passed on at once to another, in a drawing-room from which sham was long ago banished. Her answer was swift and short: "Because men are more sentimental." This amplifies into a statement that men at heart are impractical, inclined to the pursuit of useless things, while women, although they may be equally impressionable, align their efforts with useful ends, a view not to be idly dismissed. If we take as types of nature-seer the two greatest that English-speaking countries have produced we find in

Henry Thoreau and W. H. Hudson two men whose influence is entirely against utilitarianism—"impractical" men, careless of personal advantage and establishment, completely for a mode of perception and participation in the nature-life. There is no nest-feathering instinct in Thoreau, no urge toward economic security in Hudson. Neither one would have valued an estate or servants, houses, dogs, horses, and social magnificence. Both wished for leisure to be in contact with the things they liked best, and these things were: roughly, birds, fishes; a stridulating insect; wood-shade, and water; the drip of rain-drops; snow; leaf-mold, and the flora of a bog; fox, hornet, heron—every sort of wild creature irrespective of its use to them or to any man. If our word "naturist" has any meaning, these men are the type. If our word "sentiment" does not connote the quality of their interest that is a fault of language, and we have no proper word. It has not been coined.

But whatever the quality of their interest and of that inner drive which propels them toward nature it cannot be construed as distinctively feminine. By long inheritance and habit a woman's interest is personal and indoor. It does not go out instinctively to an impersonal and a useless outdoor world. When she has become further emancipated, perhaps it will. As she has already rid herself to a great extent of masculine domination, she may one day be freed of the compelling necessity to possess all kinds of convenient and

useful things. And if that should occur it will mean a very real emancipation from those economic slaveries which, while they release her from social parasitism, make her a creature of business hours and exacting professional work. Therefore a study of the nature movement is a forward-looking subject and not an academic appraisal of deeds accomplished by men. No masculine bias enters into it. Due to natural accidents and social causes men have pioneered along this path, hitherto. They have not come to the end of it. The issue hangs very much in the balance and the most potent influence in the future may be that of a woman. Indeed it is hard to see how there can be any check to the growing artificiality of our American living until women, around whose interests it centers, reinterpret the nature world from their own point of view. When they do this, their contribution will not be imitative but original, as it is in the two cases described in this book.

A modern woman when she drinks, smokes and adopts the "single standard" is not doing anything original. She is merely taking over some of the pastimes of the male. There is no form of amusement or of behavior which she will not copy, and none that men will not tolerate. But when she goes to the field and the wood, or to the river and the lake, not to shoot or fish but merely to be there, and for the sake of an awareness that she does not find in town, she is no mimic. This awareness which comes so thinly to park

or common, and is quite deleted in a many-storied city apartment, is no masculine perquisite. Considered crudely as recreation it is not now, it never was the pleasure or predilection of men. From the beginning, they hunted and fished, but what they saw in the world around them—whether of sights, scents or activities, and the whisper of inanimate things—depended wholly on their qualities of mind and spirit; depended on something more than their keenness in pursuit of game. It was neither masculine nor feminine. It was human, in the highest sense. When the sportsman's impulse dropped out and one went out solely to perceive and to feel, to enjoy and perhaps record his impressions, we had something new. The age of the naturists had begun. There was no reason why woman should not share the experience equally with man. In any case she could not copy, for there is no copying in the thing we are describing. It is original or else it is spurious. You cannot, by cramming your mind with nature-lore in book form, have a single valid impression. From Bartram to Beebe the books act as stimuli and as lures. By reading them you clarify your own seeing and quicken your senses. If as an effect of one such volume you can hear more in a cricket's chirp than you had heard before, your time has not been wasted. It is not a matter of information. A naturist does not tell you *about* nature. He drives you to it or he remains a naturalist, and nothing more. Our common-school education has become a cult of the

second-hand, therefore the originals are few, and none are expected. But in this field right perception is original perception. Nothing else counts.

Mary Austin has given us original perception. She is pre-eminent among living nature writers who are women because she has done this with force, with feeling and with a prophetic quality in the writing which is a mark of naturists of the first rank. She has not merely seen the flowers, shrubs, storms, mesas of the desert but she has swept all of these and their impalpable nuances into a vision which is not fanciful but real—real as only intuitive and poetic perceptions can be. Through her close and colorful interpretations the lives of Mesa folk, of whatever race, but especially that of the Pueblo Indians, become moving realities within an intelligible nature scheme. They can never again be wholly misunderstood. No naturist has done finer work from a human point of view, and the work is not yet complete. It will not be finished until every person who lives has the chance to know, if only for a child's glimpse, the world out of which he was made, and the moods of it. Let us hope for more naturists who are women. After all, is not nature our "mother"? Inexorable law, grim and exacting to the end—that's a masculine conception. In the cosmos itself, and not merely in the Church, we need a Madonna, and let who can, be her spokesman.

# AMERICAN NATURISTS

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IN the days of Benjamin Franklin a young American took a fancy to the plants, herbs and trees that were so many and varied in "Penn's Woods." He liked to know them, bark, bud and seed, in winter; leaf and root as well as flower, in the spring. He soon knew them better than any other person living in the New World. This required much tramping in the wilderness, and he complained, "I can't find one that will bear the fatigue and accompany me in my peregrinations." So, for the most part, he tramped alone. This was John Bartram, our first American naturalist of note, in an age when to be a naturalist meant to be something more, since science was not a closed compartment and a technical preoccupation of the mind.

Five years before a Fulton steamboat began to ply on an American river, a Scotch immigrant, turned schoolmaster, met a son of John Bartram's at Grey's Ferry. Thwarted in love and disappointed in his life, the schoolmaster wrote poetry and, on his flute, played melancholy Scottish airs. Touched by his case William Bartram showed Alexander Wilson how to draw and describe birds; and named for him those he did not know. Catching the clue (although in middle life)

Wilson kindled like flame and in ten years' time produced the first original American book on birds, illustrated by drawings from his own hand.

Ten years before Audubon had conceived the notion of publishing his famous work, Wilson met him by sheer accident, while soliciting patrons for his own enterprise, travelling widely through the States. At that time Audubon, ostensibly a trader, at Louisville, was indulging in the unbusinesslike pastime of collecting and making pictures of birds; so intent on them, that, as he himself confessed, he often lost sight of the pack-saddles that carried his goods through the forests, while watching the motions of birds. Those goods have long since been worn and forgotten, but the dream of an unthrifty merchant is preserved in the great plates of Audubon's "Birds of America."

In 1838, while (in England) John James Audubon was rushing to completion the latest of those plates, young Henry Thoreau, not one year out of Harvard College, was writing in his journal:

Dec. 16

> How indispensable to a correct study of Nature is a perception of her true meaning. The fact will one day flower out into a truth. The season will mature and fructify what the understanding had cultivated. Mere accumulators of facts—collectors of materials for the master-workmen—are like those plants growing in dark forests, which put forth only leaves instead of blossoms.

—and for the best part of his life thereafter he was walking in woods, waiting by ponds, lingering under wall-sides in the sunshine or listening to sounds that

no man else thought worth the attention: trying to arrive at that "true meaning," training his perception as none of his countrymen had trained it, that he might perceive *as a person* what nature meant.

In November, 1860, the *Atlantic Monthly* published an essay, "Expression," by an unknown man, scarcely yet to be called a writer, self-taught and aged twenty-three. It was philosophical in approach, Emersonian in manner, and was commonly believed to have been Emerson's, as it was published (like all the essays at that date) unsigned. The writer was John Burroughs. In it he had said:

> . . . Nature exists to the mind not as an absolute realization, but as a condition, as something constantly becoming. . . It is suggestive and prospective; a body in motion, and not an object at rest.

It was too soon for a book on "Creative Evolution," and John Burroughs was destined to spend the greater part of his days observing the motions of this world about us that is "constantly becoming"; observing it with less tension than Thoreau, but with an equal devotion and accuracy. It was as if he forgot to look for an ultimate meaning and trusted that the habit and fact of eager and daily attention to this ever-changing Nature, would be meaning enough . . . so only that many men were brought to share the habit and enjoy the fact. Two years after "Expression" was printed, Thoreau was no more, and Burroughs had yet sixty years to live.

With forty-nine of them gone to good account, John Burroughs met John Muir (but not for the first time) in the West, and the two rambled together in the mountains that Muir had made his own. Both were veteran naturists of more than seventy years in age, and both known in every hamlet in the United States. Insensible (or so it seemed) either to hunger or fatigue, and careless of sleep, the man of glaciers showed the man of woods and meadows all that he had the endurance to see. Muir himself had seen and experienced, and had interpreted in his prose, more of sublime aspects of the nature-world than it is given most men to gape at and pass by. Burroughs himself had described him, years before, as "Probably the truest lover of Nature as she appears in woods, mountains, and glaciers, we have yet had"; and had said of him, "A poet and almost a Seer. Something ancient and far-away in the look of his eyes."

This slight but cogent linkage between the lives of these seven priests of the nature world needs to be stressed in order to be noticed. It is clearer to us than it could be to them as they lived. John and William Bartram, Wilson quickened directly by them; Audubon in no vital contact, yet carrying forward a purpose we know to be the same; Thoreau aloof in person, yet a beacon in the chain of their flares; Burroughs and Muir, dissimilar in temperament and vocation, forming a picturesque concordat in old age: these seven are the significant links in the American chain. The

story of their lives is the story of American nature, or rather of nature in America, as seen by discerning eyes; seen, that is to say, as an intimate interest and concern of persons; seen as a daily and familiar experience in their conscious lives.

(They, for the most part, capitalized the word, "Nature," but I will not; for, personify it as you may, it means to us as it meant to them, woods, plants, birds, rocks, landscapes, breaths of air or ether, rivers, falls, flowers. Seen severally or in synthesis these require no capitals and no personification. Nature is personal only in the mind of the watcher or seer: but the seer is often most impersonal when most deeply stirred by what he has seen.)

* * * * *

The lives of these seven men stretch from the birth of John Bartram, in 1699, to the death of John Burroughs in 1921, two hundred and twenty-two American years. There was an overlap, as we have seen, and some actual contact in the lives. Their under-flow of influence was in any case unique and continuous. Of its trend they were more unconscious than we need to be. Each made his own distinct contribution, and between any two of them there could be no real competition, although mistaken admirers created controversy as to the merits of Wilson and Audubon.

All seven are worth more than a casual notice, but it is a question of *how,* not *what* they are worth.

Only two have been rated as "men of science." Not one was a "closet naturalist" or tabulator of exact data according to modern uses. All seven were outdoor men. Were they possessed of a nature-passion? Followers of a whim or illusion? Was their love of the earth-life a mania merely, that sane folk can afford to ignore? —It is a question worth looking into. In answering it we may determine their worth, not to "science" but to ourselves.

We are all of us naturists in some sense and at some times; as when we go fishing, climb a mountain, tent out, walk in the rain or throw ourselves prone on the grass, hear a tree-cricket at dusk or thrush before dawn, distinguish the sound or sense, attend to and yield to it. But these are idle pastimes, or so they seem to us. To make much of them, to make a life of them, appears a form of lunacy. For nine out of ten of us it would be; or for a much larger proportion.

Wilson was a weaver who would not weave, Audubon a merchant who would not sell goods, Thoreau a pencil-maker who would not make pencils, Burroughs a farmer who would not farm, Muir a rake-manufacturer who would not make rakes: all bad examples to follow, all eccentric if not even perverse in their attitude toward the work of the world. Yet they mean something to us, and could mean more than they do. Sleek citizens scorned their shabby clothes and scoffed at their unthrift. Now millionaires

pay large amounts for letters in their hand and signature, and treasure early imprints of their books.

They created a literature and forced us to attend to it; or rather we were forced by our need.

Here is a curious paradox. Nature produced science and science is supposed to be an account of natural laws; yet the more science increases the more nature is diminished as fact and as value, or vanishes into formulæ of energy, into mathematical descriptions of atomic and electrical force.

John Bartram salvaged for us out of the dark of the middle Eighteenth Century forests, the song of an Indian, heard by himself alone, wakeful at night in Penn's Woods.

William Bartram passed on to us an impression of the cooing of Catesby's ground-doves, in the South. He found them "perfectly enchanting," and so do we—listening through his pages, faded by a hundred and fifty years.

Alexander Wilson gave us, besides his drawings, wrought with such heroic pains (by candle-light often) verbal pictures that evoke the robin, the red-headed woodpecker, the mocker; evocations more valued than descriptions of rarer birds.

Audubon, showing his bird drawings to Sir Walter Scott evoked from the novelist that journal jotting with the phrase "these gay little sylphs" which makes us see the American warblers with Scott's eyes.

Henry Thoreau, setting forth on the last day of

August for a trifling trip in a row-boat (described in the "Week") left us a casual picture of a man "we passed . . . on the shore fishing with a long birch pole, its silvery bark left on, and a dog at his side." They rowed for a mile "as straight as an arrow . . . there stood the fisher still." And there he stands for all time.

John Burroughs, according to his whim, devoted some pages to a certain downy woodpecker, who lived near "Slabsides," in a hollow tree. As a result his readers know that particular bird as an individual (in "Winter Neighbors") and no amount of speculative theory will convince them that a bird is only a mechanism, a compound pellet of chemical forces flung off on a tangent to genetic laws.

John Muir advised us to take a pack and flee to the silences of his mountain preserves, forget the date and "let the big days go by uncounted": we have not obeyed, but there is in us a secret persuasion that nothing else we could do would be so sane or so assuaging.

These are small frail clues and may lead nowhere, or they may lead to soul-happiness. Who can be sure? Clues are all we shall receive, for there are no certainties. Therefore we care to think sometimes of these seven and sip at the springs they found for us in the American wild.

Their life-stories are long; but we dip flying, like a passing bird.

# EARLY AMERICAN NATURISTS

## JOHN BARTRAM

THIRTY years before Gilbert White, in a letter to Pennant, sketched his plan of "a natural history of my native parish," and more than forty years before the book was completed, John Bartram made the following entry.

"The third day of July 1743, I set out from my home on the Skuylkil River, with Lewis Evans, and travelled beyond Perkiomy Creek the first day."

In 1851 the record of this journey, as completed, was printed for J. Whiston and B. White, in London, without the author's knowledge, as

OBSERVATIONS
On The
*Inhabitants, Soil, Climate, Rivers*
*Productions, Animals, and Other Matters Worthy of Notice*
Made By
Mr. John Bartram
In His Travels
In
Pensilvania
Onondago, Oswego, and Lake Ontario
In Canada.

In a considerable preface the publishers explained that there were more gentlemen who desired to read the manuscript than could conveniently see it, hence their resort to printing, for which the original record was not intended. They apologized for "those places where only are treated of the several plants with which nature has bountifully covered the hills and the valleys he traversed." Not nature interest, was the motive to which the publishers hoped to appeal but quite a different one; which is plainly indicated where they deplore the fact that "we are outdone by another *Nation*," in adventurous discoveries, and state that "we are indebted to our most dangerous rivals for the little we do know, who will, if possible, repay themselves by excluding us from all we do not actually cultivate, and leave us only that while they want the power to take it from us."

They include in their book a map made by Bartram's companion, Evans, of which the central feature is The Endless Mountains indicating indeed a need for further adventurous discoveries. These are shown as a part of a territory called Aquanushionigy, and the legend *Impenetrable Mountains* imprinted here and there.

Concerning the author himself, the publishers offer the following characterization and apology:

> It is a misfortune to the public that this ingenious person had not a literal education, it is no wonder, therefore, that his stile is not clear as we could wish, however, in every piece of his, there are evident marks of much good sence and penetration, and sincerity, joined to a commendable curiosity.

By "literal" we suppose they meant literary, or pertaining to letters. To one who reads the narrative today the want is not so apparent. Bartram's account is simple, straightforward, and without literary allusions, Latin quotations or other arabesques. There is nothing wrong with his "stile." He bore important messages to northern tribes of Indians, whose haunts, ways, feasts, mind and character he circumstantially describes; but his eye is chiefly for plants, and his text betrays a botanist and forester at every page. What woodsman, other than his own son William Bartram, in all the American Colonies, would have spoken of passing through "a bottom producing ginseng, sarsaparilla, mediola, maidenhair, darallia, panax, mitela, christophoriana, with white, red and blue berries"? None, in those times; and although he had, on this official embassy, a fellow-explorer, he had no scientific companion in his walks and tours. To an English correspondent he complained.

> Our Americans have very little taste for these amusements. I can't find one that will bear the fatigue and accompany me on my peregrinations.

His correspondents were chiefly European, including Linnæus, from whom he received, in 1744, as he has recorded, the second edition of the *Characteres Plantarrum* "and a loving letter." The Swedish Botanist had a high esteem for him and is said to have described this humble Pennsylvanian as "the greatest natural botanist in the world."

In many ways John Bartram was a practical naturalist, collector and plant-distributor. To his patrons in England he sent new species for introduction, and from them he received bulbs, roots and seed. From Lord Petre and from the Duke of Richmond he received ten guineas each, during the earlier years of his work as a collector. (Lord Richmond was the enlightened friend of the colonists and their champion in the debate of 1778, initiating the motion to recall the troops from America.) For Benjamin Franklin, who was publishing an American edition of Short's *Medicina Britannica,* he wrote a preface. Becoming better known in England he was, in 1865, appointed botanist to the King, for the Floridas, at a salary of fifty pounds a year; and in that capacity he explored the St. John with his son William as companion.

The clues which we have followed in placing the name of John Bartram among American Naturists are necessarily somewhat fragile and overlaid by time. Had he been no more than "an ingenious person," as his first publishers describe him, and a pioneer collector, he could hardly have deserved recognition here. Frail as it is, the following clue is authentic. To Peter Collinson he wrote in 1764,

> I had always since ten years old a great inclination to plants, and knew all that I once observed, by sight, though not by their proper names, having no persons nor books to instruct me.

For this lack he made ample amends as he had

opportunity. What interests us chiefly is his natural bent as betrayed by the statement "I had a great inclination to plants." Plants of every sort were the particular banner which caught this boy's eye at ten years and held him loyal through a long life.

His interest in animals was not so lively, nor so natural. He felt a slight physical recoil from them, as described in one of his own letters:

> As for the animals and insects, it is very few that I touch of choice, and most with an uneasiness. Neither can I behold any of them that have not done me a manifest injury, in their agonizing mortal pains, without pity.

The last part of the quotation shows him tolerant, as true naturists always are, of those forms of life which they cannot personally enjoy, or toward which they feel no instinctive attraction.

From hints in his early journal of travel, construct a picture of a hardy and enduring woodsman, able to adjust himself to every sort of situation which an untamed wilderness could supply, and yet careful for his reasonable comfort; a light sleeper, who deplored the fact that having moved an Indian shelter to escape the insect population of its floor-dust, he was kept awake by the leaks from the roof. But in such wakefulness we find him, on another occasion, heedful and aware of things that his companions missed; as in this pleasing description of a vigil, uncatalogued, not entirely explicable, of primitive man and his song of the dark:

We had a fine warm night, and one of the Indians that had so generously feasted us, sung in a solemn and harmonious manner, for seven or eight minutes, very different from the common Indian tune, from which I conjectured it to be a hymn to the great spirit as they express it. In the morning I asked the Interpreter what the Indian meant by it, but he did not hear him, and indeed I believe none of the company heard him but myself, who wake with a little noise, rarely sleeping sound abroad.

Susceptive, quiet, strong in the pursuit of those things for which he had a vocation, John Bartram fits easily into the frame which his times make for him. Without him the frame remains empty and we ache for one authentic picture of an early nature lover who observed with an accurate eye and not merely a pious Puritan mind.

The picture is there and needs no "faking." The man we describe was born in 1699 to a settler also named John Bartram who came from England to Pennsylvania in 1682. The house built by the second Bartram, in Philadelphia still stands, or was standing in 1913. It was built in 1731, under the Dutch influence, of a rough concrete, chiefly, and with columns of this material at the sides of an enclosed porch. Three dormer windows, Ionic capitals of the pillars, the design of the windows, gable, and general setting, give it both distinction and charm. Here were born, in 1732, William Bartram and his twin, Elizabeth. From this house, in 1773, William, who ably carried on his father's tradition and interests, set out on his perilous journey in the country of the Cherokees.

John Bartram has been described by an anonymous writer as one who had "a vital intimacy with the surface of the earth." We gladly credit the unknown author of so expressive a phrase, with saying what this Pennsylvanian deserved to have said. The term "botanist" does not exhaust him, used as a descriptive word. There was nothing in the age of Benjamin Franklin and of Thomas Jefferson—the age of thrift, industry, expansion and political self-discovery—to challenge or draw forth those finer responses and reasonings of a sensitive nature which mark the newer naturists. There was, indeed, scant recognition for them when they appeared a hundred years later in Thoreau. We accept the Philadelphian for what he was, and do not demand of him the proofs of a subjective and reflective living which would have unfitted him for his rôle as pioneer and explorer, founder of the first botanical garden in America: [1] a nature-lover, surely, and also a man of initiative and good sense.

[1] At Kingsessing, near Grey's Ferry, on the Schuylkill River.

## WILLIAM BARTRAM

CURIOUSLY, the name of William Bartram, naturalist, is less known than that of his pupil in nature, Alexander Wilson, a man of lesser learning but greater ambition, and the genius for conceiving and carrying out the project of a great book—for his time.

William Bartram lived in true Quaker quiet at the Botanical Garden founded by his father; continued, like the latter, to collect, describe and export plants, seeds and roots of new or rare species; extended his observation to birds and is remembered in the naming of some of them, as Bartram's Sandpiper; described in good discursive writing his journey in the Carolinas; envied none and befriended all who could profit by the clues he had to give. Wilson was of all men then living in the Quaker Colony the one who could and did profit by those clues; therefore the close linkage of their names.

In 1802 Wilson, a rather wan and discouraged poet, came to live and teach at Grey's Ferry, near the home of the Bartrams. William was then sixty-two years of age. The two became friends. The older man must have found the younger an ardent and interesting companion; not the least because he recognized any kind of scholarly culture (not merely the classical) and was

eager to learn. To the younger man the contact was simply an immeasurable gift of fortune. It brought not merely social diversion and intellectual stimulus but an antidote for his spiritual ills. The antidote was nature—not a vague surrounding influence or feeder to poetic emotions, but a definite interest and activity combined. This was simply salvation for the Paisley poet. And he owed the discovery to Bartram and no one else. It was the sight of William Bartram's portfolio, no doubt, of original bird-drawings, that spurred him to try his hand. The atmosphere of the Botanical Garden and of accurate observation, of scientific language in the Bartram household, gave him the incentive to emulate it in his own work; to cease writing mediocre verses *about* nature and record some of its living realities with crayon and pen.

William Bartram was his confidant and mentor in this over-turn of habits and plans. The first chilling caution which the naturalist administered was no more than a proper check and test of an indubitably rash impulse. Wilson resented it as a hot-head will, but found his friend not less helpful when the impulse proved unstoppable than before it was revealed, as an ambitious, almost impracticable plan. All that matter of the American Ornithology concerns Wilson himself, and not Bartram. It was in the personal relation between the two that we see the Quaker in a true naturist's rôle.

Nature had been, to the older man, his life long an

engrossing interest, a delight, and occupation. In the younger—by no means *young* man—he divined an acute need of something within his gift. Writing was not, preëminently, his vocation. He lived in the spirit and the act of interpreting and observing the life about him; not in the word. The man was less picturesque than his parent, less intense than his pupil, and wholly careless about the things that tend to make a great name. Here is Wilson's own tribute to his inspirer:

> I confess that I was always an enthusiast in my admiration of the rural scenery of nature; but since your example and encouragement have set me to attempt to imitate her productions, I see new beauties in every bird, plant, or flower I contemplate.

Such statements (in his letters) from Wilson, and the tone of his own writing, give us an impression of a man rich in experience of every aspect of wild life, keen in his enjoyment of natural beauty, but not especially gifted in expression save as he could communicate his lore and feeling in personal contact.

In the *Introduction* to his "Travels," William Bartram, in language that seems today rhetorical, gave his apology for attending as well to nature as to "men and manners"; an apology which betrays the prevalent indifference to such matters as trees and birds and species of plants not strictly medicinal or edible, in his day. He would have his countrymen see

> This world as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the Sovereign Creator, furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures.

That rhetorical and pietistic touch, so natural to his time, does not quite conceal the genuine sensitiveness betrayed in his word "inexpressible." And when the argument leaves off its peroration and begins to show body it drops that gloss and becomes both plain and accurate.

He writes of the variety and uses of plants, or their decorative aspects; of "sportive vegetables," mentioning specifically Dioneæ.

He notes an essential similarity between the reproductive vitality and processes in plants and animals.

He gives detailed lists of plants encountered, and of animals as well.

He compiles a list of birds, and describes the species with appreciation; as when he speaks of the fishing hawk as "this princely bird"; or says of Catesby's ground-doves, "they are remarkably beautiful, about the size of a sparrow, and their soft and plaintive cooing is perfectly enchanting." He has notes on fishes, and some observations on insects.

He is, in short, an all-round student and lover of nature, who so fully embodied what he knew of the relation between man and earth's creatures that it would not have occurred to him to talk or philosophize about it. He had not, like Audubon, one consuming passion; unlike Wilson, had not been thwarted.

Hence the want of spectacular accomplishment in his life.

## ALEXANDER WILSON

AMERICAN by adoption. Born in Paisley, Scotland in 1766 and lived there, as a journeyman weaver, poet and peddler till the age of twenty-eight. Besides a mind, he had legs. As he wrote in his poem, "Groans from the Loom,"

> Good gods! shall a mortal with *legs,*
> So low uncomplaining be brought!

He would have walked to America on them had there been a dirt road. Wanting that, he stuck to the loom four months after his decision to migrate, lived on one shilling a week and saved the price of a deck passage. He arrived at Newcastle, Delaware, in July, 1794, and immediately walked to Philadelphia, thirty-three miles. On the way he saw and was ravished by, his first American bird. It was the red-headed woodpecker, an enchanting sight to a wayfarer and wanderer in a strange land. The germ of the "American Ornithology" lay in this impression, no doubt, although he did not know it, and was not to know it for nine years.

Young weaver Wilson had been a poet; never an art student or an observer of nature lore in its accurate details. For ten years he taught school, but in the seventh year of that profession met William Bartram.

It was the year of his deep depression and growing despondency, which one biographer attributes to his being "addicted" to poetry and music, but which must have been largely owing to confinement and an injury to his constitution, of which he wrote to his friends. Bartram, to relieve this melancholia, advised, as a hobby, the drawing of birds. Wilson seized upon the suggestion and, with the help of his friend, taught himself drawing in his thirty-sixth year. At thirty-seven that dormant germ of an American Ornithology was fully awake. The records of European writers were indecisive and incomplete. He had determined to write the book and illustrate it with his own hands. He even broached the matter to his friends, to the botanist, Bartram, and the engraver, Lawson.

Bartram was getting old, and the counsels of age are cool. Lawson had the caution of a strict, professional man. Both were kind, but felt bound to indicate that the difficulties of the undertaking were very great. Not unnaturally Wilson, who by this time had found in bird-study, not an idle pastime but a deep engrossing pleasure that stimulated and commanded his best powers, resented their chill response to his ambitious scheme. He disliked not only the coolness but the logic of these restraining arguments. He dubbed them the "maxims of a cold, calculating, contemptible philosophy." This from a Scotchman born.

He was wrong there. The maxims were not contemptible, they were eminently respectable. It was his

enterprise that was foolhardy and impolitic . . . but he had the good grace to go on with it, the grit to hold to it till the thing changed, like Proteus, from a form strange and chimerical to one proper and god-like, as such enterprises will do. It is not the first time, nor the last, that a thing begun as relaxation has turned out to be the work of a life.

With the details of that work we are not so much concerned, here. We are concerned with the man himself: with Alexander Wilson, born a Scotch peasant, bred a weaver, fledged a poet, and found at the last a man of science and an American naturist, willing to spend himself wholly in his chosen work.

Treating him in this character I am absolved from technical criticism of his writings and the deft tracings of his drawing hand. Enough that they were accepted as important contributions to American ornithology, and that his fame there is secure. An ornithologist is by no means of necessity a naturist. This migrant weaver-poet was one. He proved it in youth by his restlessness under the tyranny of the hand-loom when confined by it, and his delight in scenery of the most ordinary sort when released. "Ordinary" means here accustomed; such scenes as he himself described in his early lines as

> The winding walk, the solitary wood,
> The uncouth grotto, melancholy, rude;
> My refuge there, the attending muse to call,
> Or in Pope's lofty page to lose them all.

A young mind, somewhat inclined to melancholy, susceptible to poetry and under the influence of Pope would not make much progress in a consciousness of reality, pulsatile, actual, which is the ground-tissue of a naturist's perception. The poetic sense is not inimical to perception. It is even necessary; but it must not engross the perceiving mind. A poet exploits moods, emotions, takes off from a point in nature and may never return; he skims or soars because he must say the unsayable. A naturist walks on the ground.

An Americanized Wilson, frustrated as poet, physically forespent as schoolmaster, found his salvation in walking: but not till a naturist's pastimes gave him the incentive. Friendship, poetry, music, a serious purpose and a profession—he had all these, and they were not enough. He needed—and who does not?—something that would engross his whole energy and stimulate his full powers. A chance suggestion gave him that needed release, and from the time when this new avocation of drawing and coloring the native birds caught his fancy and engaged his real abilities, he lived in an actual, a stimulating, a health-giving world. He observed, recorded, pictured and wrote of that world.

All these activities, incident to his new calling, must have been implicit in the act of walking; for when one is trained to it and walks freely, strongly and undistracted by companions, all his faculties are made more active, perception intensified, his various objectives

made present and vivid to his mind. These projections are easily transferred to paper when he stops. There are no dead sedentary levels for an active naturist engaged in some concrete aspect of his chosen work.

A cessation of these activities seems harmful. Audubon would not tolerate it. Wilson submitted to the urge of his ambitions, attempting more than he could achieve. Even when in a moment of relaxation he played, as of old, his flute, he seems to have lapsed into that melancholia out of which his arduous enterprise had lifted him. It appears so in Audubon's note, in the "Ornithological Biography," under the account headed "Louisville, in Kentucky," where this passage occurs:

> It happened that he lodged in the same house with us, but his retired habits, I thought, exhibited either a strong feeling of discontent, or a decided melancholy. The Scotch airs which he played sweetly on his flute made me melancholy too, and I felt for him.

Seventy years later Elliott Coues, in the presence of a collection of Wilson drawings in the possession of Joseph M. Wade (containing, he thought, half the originals of the famous plates) was moved with an impression of like pathos in the work itself: "I was fairly oppressed with the sad story of poverty, even destitution, which these wan sheets of coarse paper told." [1] He was, however, happy in that work: in the

[1] "Behind the Veil," Bulletin Nuttal Ornith. Club, Vol. V, Cambridge, 1880.

act of drawing, in the making and pursuit of his ambitious plans, in all the self-forgetfulness the work entailed. "I am most earnestly bent," he wrote to Lawson, "on pursuing my plan of making a collection of all the birds in this part of North America. . . . I have been so long accustomed to the building of airy castles and brain windmills, that it has become one of my earthly comforts, a sort of rough bone, that amuses me when sated with the dull drudgery of life."

"He was of the *genus irritabile,*" wrote George Ord, in a much-quoted characterization. In Jung's modern terminology he would be distinctly an *introvert*—a cast of mind partly foreshadowed in his own descriptive allusion to "brain windmills," but in part corrected by the very activities his "airy castles" involved.

Beneficent as it was in relieving him from sadness and introspective musing, the nature interest was not as effective as it might have been with the poet-schoolmaster. It gave him a new absorbing occupation, it freed him at last from the desk, but like most mortals he confused the outer objective of his labors with the inner attainment of a goal not then dimly described, and even now obscurely seen.

The stirrings of a genuine response to that a world of which birds are but one appealing feature are felt by many; become articulate in few. That the response is inner, and its truth or significance more accessible to the spirit than to the reasoning faculties, is known to fewer still. Thus our earlier naturists are lost in

their outer activities—they ford or swim streams and invade morasses in pursuit of new species of birds; they endure cold, sickness, danger, every imaginable discomfort without complaint—but their inner synthesis of all this experience we are obliged to divine from the scantest evidence, and from chance allusions to matters of personal feeling, recorded without reflection as one might set down a passing pleasure or a purpose not too clearly defined.

* * * * *

James Craw's portrait of Wilson shows him a sensitive person, slightly built; eyes large, given to reflection; a mouth singularly fine. The face is neither austere nor serious, but rather signifying a point of focus beyond the immediate present; a poetic and attractive face. It seems to belie the adventurous spirit that drove him many miles afoot through the wilderness, down the length of the Ohio in an open skiff, and alone on horseback far from white settlements in the country of the Chickasaws, till so reduced by illness as scarcely to be able to stand. Later descriptions show him in mature life as one "aggressive or winning, according to mood." And we know from his own confession that he was sensitive to the least slight, especially from a friend.

Craw's portrait was painted when Wilson was still in Scotland, in his twenty-second year. It gives therefore the characteristics of youth: but at that age they

are the essential man. At forty he may have hardened and acquired a power of setting aside dreams and moving among strict realities. His innermost nature will not change.

This innermost man was a naturist. So the present author believes, and must now prove by the man's written words. His quality of naturist rather than strict naturalist will appear better in his letters and in the introduction to his great work. Many of the letters appear in a memoir by Robert Jamieson, printed with the Edinburgh text of the "American Ornithology," dated 1831, from which I quote:

(To William Bartram; date not given, but apparently written in 1803)

> I sometimes smile to think, that while others are immersed in deep schemes of speculation and aggrandizement, in building towns and purchasing plantations, I am entranced in contemplation over the plumage of a lark, or gazing, like a despairing lover, on the lineaments of an owl. While others are hoarding up their bags of money, without the power of enjoying it, I am collecting, without injury to my conscience, or wounding my peace of mind, those beautiful specimens of Nature's works that are for ever pleasing.

It is such admissions of the deep underlying ground of his devotion that make us sure of our man. Without them (or if such perceptions atrophy in one who formerly had them) we have only a collector and a statistician; one who shoots birds in series, to record variations in plumage and measurements of wings, tarsus and tail, to the intent that more and more sub-

species may be added to an already staggering list. Such work is pure science and may be entered upon consciously . . . but not by a born naturist, or rather not to the exclusion of all that he counts a prime interest of life. We know from even a single personal confession like this to Bartram, what that interest was; and we are pleased to see a touch of genuine humor in his simile and self-picture: "gazing, like a despairing lover on the lineaments of an owl."

The *Introduction* to his "American Ornithology" contains an explicit statement of his aims. He admits two motives; the first technical, "the correction of numerous errors which have been introduced into this part of the natural history of our country,"—a motive which he shared with every subsequent ornithologist, and which, combined with the search for new facts, or new arrangement of fact, occupies a strict scientist. The second, general, or at least non-technical, he describes as "a wish to draw the attention of my fellow-citizens, occasionally, from the discordant jarrings of politics, to a contemplation of the grandeur, harmony, and wonderful variety of nature, exhibited in this beautiful portion of the animal creation."

Naively put, of course, according to the pompous language of the time. We need not read too much into such a statement, but we may at least strip off the husk of grandiloquence and find in this second motive the germ of a naturist's urge. Truth to fact, in these eight volumes (the eighth was in press when a

fatal illness occurred) was the strict reality in which the man moved. The will to appreciate harmony and variety in nature, through contemplation, was certainly present all through the severe disciplines which he undertook in the name of a recorder and portrayer of fact. We feel that he socialized that personal motive as far as it was possible for him to do so.

Take account of the social diffusion, in Wilson's day, of sentiments now so commonplace as to have long been crystallized in laws. Where were they? How appeal to a higher aesthetic when the lower appreciation of mere utilitarian interest in birds had not penetrated far enough to prevent such an occurrence as he describes in

> 92. *Turdus Migratorius,* Linnæus and Wilson.—The Robin. . . . When berries fail, they disperse themselves over the fields, and along the fences, in search of worms and other insects. Sometimes they will disappear for a week or two, and return in greater numbers than before; at which time the cities pour out their sportsmen by scores, and the markets are plentifully supplied at a cheap rate. In 1807 two young men, in one excursion, after them, shot thirty dozen. In the midst of such devastation, which continued many weeks, and, by accounts, extended from Massachusetts to Maryland, some humane person took advantage of a circumstance to stop the general slaughter. The fruit called poke-berries (*Phytolacca decandria Linn.*) is a favorite repast of the robin, after they are mellowed by frost. The juice of the berries is of a beautiful crimson, and they are eaten in such quantities by these birds that their whole stomachs are tinged with the same red colour. A paragraph appeared in the public papers, intimating, that from the great quantities of these berries which the robins had fed on, they had become unwholesome, and even dangerous food; and that several persons had suffered from

eating them. . . . The demand for, and use of them, ceased almost instantly; and motives of self-preservation produced at once what the pleadings of humanity could not effect.

Despite such widespread callousness, Wilson is able to record that the robin's nest "is held more sacred among schoolboys than that of some others; and, while they will exult in plundering a jay's or catbird's, a general sentiment of respect prevails on the discovery of a robin's." He thinks, with reason, that this may in part be owing to "the well-known and long established character of his namesake in Britain." That would be a derivative and traditional respect, and not due to discriminating attention to nature, of which, it is evident, there was little.

The "American Ornithology" certainly promoted such discrimination. In its pages we need not look for much more of conscious interpretation of the man-to-nature relation, or of any still more subtle forms of perception, than we should expect to find in a modern bird-book. These further-than-fact preoccupations are not for Wilson's day and not for Audubon's. They burst into brightness first in Thoreau's pages, and even then are premature.

Our first ornithologist worked with devotion, observed with intelligence and described with accuracy. He did not permit himself the rhapsodical flights his poetic temperament and training might have excused, but owned that he listened to the notes of the brown thrasher "with a kind of devotional ecstasy," and that

he pitied the human beings who pass such scenes as made the setting for them, "with cold indifference and even contempt." In such mild and innocent utterances he expressed those intuitions which are common to humane persons and only when refined by much reflection acquire a new power for communication: a mature naturist's pen.

## JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

THERE is no inflated legend, requiring to be punctured, about the life and character, or the personal achievements of the "American Woodsman" and artist who drew the originals of the 435 copper-plate engravings printed in double elephant folia in 87 numbers as "The Birds of America." These drawings still stand the test of close scrutiny. They may be examined where obtainable (as in the Peabody Museum) in the original form, or judged of from the more easily accessible octavo edition, for which issue the figures were later reduced. They show immense vigor of conception and execution. They are a work of vitality, of perennial interest and of curious charm. They must be looked at, not as creations in pure art but as contributions to the natural history and appreciation of birds.

Upon this contribution Audubon focused the full energies of his strangely adventurous life. The main facts of it are familiar and its outward aspects have often been reviewed. There was, until recently, a veil concealing the facts of his birth. With the publication in 1917 of Herrick's *Audubon the Naturalist* that veil was removed, and the curious may read in his volume the records discovered by Herrick at Nantes

and Couëron of the adoption by Jean Audubon, and Anne Moynet (or Moinet), his wife, of "a male child named Fougère . . . born to him, Jean Audubon, and a woman living in America, who has been dead about eight years," and of the baptism, later, of the same child as "Jeans Jacques Fougère Audubon, adoptive son of Jean Audubon, lieutenant of a frigate of the Republic," etc.

That our Audubon was the natural son of this French fighter and a creole mother, born in Santo Domingo in 1785, there seems no longer any reason to doubt. All that can be known of the mother, Mlle. Rabin (as she is called) is narrated in Francis Herrick's book, together with the more pertinent facts of the boy's nurture, and the vastly interesting character of his father, self-made soldier, planter and merchant, son of Pierre Audubon, a seaman by trade. It pleases us to know that Jean Audubon commanded a fighting ship in the fleet of Count de Grasse which, by isolating the British landforces, made the surrender of Cornwallis inevitable and was a decisive factor in the War of the Revolution; that he bought a farm (Mill Grove) in Pennsylvania, and was there visited by the American commander-in-chief; that he later established his son upon that farm and liberally supplied him with luxuries as well as necessities until he was able to fend for himself.

It is evident that John James inherited from his father that sound constitution which, in an American

environment, developed into a thing of energy and rugged endurance which was the admiration of his friends; one might add, the despair of his enemies, for he had them. (To these last we owe the circumstance that Audubon's merits, even during his lifetime, were trimmed down to a sane appraisal and that there has been no fatuous hero-worship requiring attention here.) His warmth of manner, his openness and quick capacity for making friends we should be inclined to attribute to the undescribed Mlle. Rabin; for he had none of his father's calculating wisdom or thrift. He was driven from early childhood by a powerful urge in which pecuniary profit never had any part. This same carelessness of gain made possible that essentially romantic achievement of his life, the "Birds of America."

It was as a truant from hard study that young Audubon acquired a taste for drawing birds. That out-of-door interest remained with him for a lifetime, and the aptitude became, in his own words, "almost a mania," so that he would give up the drawing of a portrait, which was lucrative, in order to work from a bird-specimen, even before "The Birds of America" had taken tangible form in his mind. (This ability to draw a creditable portrait he credits to his work with David, court painter to Louis XVI, which, scant as it was, left its impress on his talent and kept his family from actual want at a time when his fortunes were at their worst.)

Young Audubon, sent to the New World by his father to escape the evils of military conscription, had lived idly for a while at Mill Grove, the estate on the Schuylkill and Perkiomen streams in Pennsylvania which his father had purchased long before. There Jean Audubon had been visited by Washington, during the days of Valley Forge, and had been presented, as a mark of esteem, with the General's portrait, said to be his first. There John James went hunting, dressed in a garb which in his later journal he derides:

> To have seen me going shooting in black satin smallclothes, or breeches, with silk stockings, and the finest ruffled shirt Philadelphia could afford, was, as I now realize, an absurd spectacle, but it was one of my many foibles and I shall not conceal it.

He adds that he was fond of amusements and never missed a ball, a house or a riding party. As for his skating, the description quoted from David Pawling (under date January, 1805) by Maria Audubon, will serve, and will also afford a sketch of the physical young man of that date.

> Today I saw the swiftest skater I ever beheld backwards, forwards he went like the wind, even leaping over large airholes fifteen or more feet across, and continuing to skate without a moment's delay. I was told he was a young Frenchman, and this evening I met him at a ball, where I found his dancing exceeded his skating; all the ladies wished him as a partner; moreover, a handsomer man I never saw, his eyes alone command attention; his name, Audubon, is strange to me.[1]

[1] "Audubon and his Journals," New York, 1900.

Ruled by a youthful intolerance he refused to see his neighbor William Bakewell, who was English; but when chance threw them together, in the woods, he saw his error, repaired the discourtesy and at once fell in love with Lucy Bakewell at "Fatland Ford." Hunting, fishing, drawing and music had occupied his time when alone. He knew nothing of responsibility, little of discipline and was as he himself has picturesquely phrased it, "too useless" to marry a wife. Nevertheless his friends, with his father's approval, got him placed as a clerk with Benjamin Bakewell in New York, with a view to having him "study the mercantile business." No more came of this than might have been expected; but with the smattering of knowledge and experience there gained we find him presently launched on a changeful and eventually disastrous business career at Louisville, Kentucky; with Lucy Bakewell as Mrs. John James Audubon—a staunch, courageous, always charming and a much enduring wife.

In the rôle of merchant, Audubon was almost grotesque. Leaving his partner, Rozier, at the counter he indulged himself in his usual occupations of hunting, fishing, and drawing birds; with the help of his attractive wife entertaining and being entertained by his sporting friends. It was a period of unalloyed and quite indefensible happiness. The only part of his mercantile obligation which he discharged personally and really enjoyed was the periodical trip to Philadelphia

or New York to purchase goods. Beyond these, he wrote: "I never thought of it." It is easy to guess why he enjoyed them; but he has been explicit on this point, and has described his feeling in adjectives we should not have thought of:

> . . . they afforded me means to study birds and their habits as I travelled through the beautiful, the darling forests of Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.

But again the mercantile interest received scant justice, for he adds immediately,

> Were I to tell you that once, when travelling, and driving several horses before me laden with goods and dollars, I lost sight of the pack-saddles, and the cash they bore, to watch the motions of a warbler, I should only repeat occurrences that happened a hundred times and more in those days.

This sums it: although married and responsible for a family he could say of this period,

> I shot, I drew, I looked on nature only; my days were happy beyond human conception, and beyond this I cared not.

Adversity was the sure fruit of this happiness. At a time when his business should have been thriving he was obliged to leave it and make a new attempt at Henderson. There it actually prospered—for he attended to it for a year—when the unfortunate episode of the steam-mill put an end to all enterprises of that sort. He was left bankrupt, and his family in want. It is a strange story, this account in his journal, of what grew out of that disaster. A short passage of it

will be sufficient to quote, and even from so little evidence the reader may perhaps judge whether it was sentiment or vocation that is indicated by the man's persistent devotion to his impractical nature work:

> After our dismal removal from Henderson . . . I took you both, Victor and John, from Shippingport to Louisville. I had purchased a loaf of bread and some apples; before we reached Louisville you were both hungry, and by the river we sat down and ate our scanty meal. On that day the world with me was a blank, and my heart was sorely heavy, for scarcely had I enough to keep my dear ones alive; and yet through these dark ways I was being led to the development of the talents I loved, and which have brought so much enjoyment to us *all,* for it is with deep thankfulness that I record that you, my sons, have passed your lives almost continuously with your dear mother and myself. But here I will stop with one remark.
>
> One of the most extraordinary things among all these adverse circumstances was that I never for a day gave up listening to the songs of our birds, or watching their peculiar habits, or delineating them in the best way I could; nay, during my deepest troubles I frequently would wrench myself from the persons around me, and retire to some secluded part of our noble forests; and many a time, at the sound of the wood-thrush's melodies have I fallen on my knees, and there prayed earnestly to our God.
>
> This never failed to bring me the most valuable of thoughts and always comfort, and, strange as it may seem to you, it was often necessary for me to exert my will, and compel myself to return to my fellow beings.

This, like all that Audubon said or did, is manifestly simple—innocent, if you like—and in this case set down solely for private record in the journal of reminiscence written in 1835, for his children. (It was entitled "Myself," and was found in an old book

which had lain hidden in a barn on Staten Island; first published in *Scribner's,* in 1893)—Let those who do not know the song of the wood-thrush, and have never really *heard* such bird-song, scoff at the effect on this simple man. No subtlety of language ever did or ever can convey the effect upon one sensitive spirit either of that song or of the yet more ethereal hermit thrush. Worship appears here to be a natural, not an acquired response, since there is only the most superficial relation between that response and any pietistic training a man may have had. It is true, no doubt, that a formal or conventional idea of "God" comes in by association of ideas to blend with the natural emotions thus aroused. But in the content of those emotions and in the *nuance* of meaning they suggest there is little that matches conventionalized notions and attitudes of mind or can remotely be expressed by them. Audubon admits, with a naïveté that proves my contention, that it was necessary for him, under this impress, to exert his will and "to compel myself to return to my fellow-beings." Such is not the effect of acquired attitudes and conventional worship. These, indeed, as was the case with the early New Englanders, would have held him to the routine he hated, made him submissive to "necessity" and "duty," kept him from such idle pastimes as drawing and painting and held him in the grooves that lead to a commercial success. Such was religion still, in the main, in America; and Pennsylvania, although less harsh than the

Yankee colonies, frowned on most of the tastes this adopted son had always indulged in.

It was not to be expected that the hunter-artist, Audubon, would contribute much to the conscious and reflective interpretation of the world he loved. He had been from earliest youth an active being whose esthetic impulse had found one main channel of expression, and that was, to use his favorite word, "delineation" of the things he most admired. There he excelled. In these drawings is to be found embodied his most intimate interpretation not merely of birds but of backgrounds; for there he introduced wood-side blossoms, plants, foliage, and touches of landscape (as in Plate CCCI, of Canvas-backed Ducks) which are not to be despised. Yet in *The Journals,* written, as they were (with the exception of "Myself") at the end of each day he presented, all untrained as he was, pictures and impressions of forest and frontier as he knew them, which convey to us more than is in the actual words. Casually dipped in they may seem quite episodic and wanting in literary merit. Unpretentious they certainly are. The present author did not think it wise to include Audubon, as a writer, among his English "Naturists"—those who have contributed some unique value to a literary form.[2] Nevertheless, in following the development of a special feeling for wild life and for all nature, whether expressed in art, lan-

[2] In "English as Experience," New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1928.

guage, or merely in a man's spirit, it is worth one's time to read with some care the earlier journals, and those parts of the "Ornithological Biography" which were first interspersed to relieve the monotony of technical description in the text which accompanied the birds, and which are now available by themselves as "Delineations of American Scenery and Character";[3] and which, although based largely on the journals, isolate special phases of experience and may be selected by the titles, according to a reader's mood.

These show no conscious craft of writing. They are simple narratives of fact. Even so, the effort to prepare them was dreaded, and properly so, by one who up to middle age had had no experience in publication and no training for the work of authorship; who was not a scholar nor even, in any strict sense, a scientist. He himself wrote in September of 1826, when the prospect first loomed before him,

> Mr. Rathbone is enthusiastic . . . and I will proceed with firm resolution to attempt the being an author. It is a terrible thing to me; far better am I fitted to study and delineate in the forest, than to arrange phrases with suitable grammatical skill.

Aside from the immediate purpose of these papers, which is to divert and inform the reader, here and there a deeper motive is sensed: that of preserving as an articulate whole that forest background which Audubon had seen vanishing under his very eyes. He could not give us that picture. He had not the art.

[3] G. A. Baker, 247 Park Ave., New York, Publisher.

He looked to Cooper and Irving to do this: in vain, for it does not fall within a story-writer's technique.

We face the fact there exists no adequate record of the American wilderness in terms of nature impression. We get flashes of it, done from meagre clues with the aid of imagination, as in Parkman; and we have the legend romanticized as in Cooper. Those who first break the barriers of so great and savage a preserve are not men of letters, or trained in perception. They are for the most part explorers, adventurers, traders or priests. The earlier actualities of North American river, prairie and forest are lost beyond recovery.

In our Audubon period we get a record of a frontier already peopled, either by "the refuse," as he puts it, of older civilizations or by honest men such as appear in the episode of "The Cougar," in whose opinion "the people are growing too numerous now to thrive in New England." Of this frontier life, its rude pleasures, dangers, sports, hardships and natural catastrophes we get a fair panorama in the "Delineations." We read of Florida in "The Live Oakers," of Pennsylvania in "The Great Pine Swamp"; of Maine in "The Burning of the Forests"; of Labrador in "The Eggers"; of the grim waste left by the inroads of the Mississippi in "A Flood." No more diverting character-sketches have appeared than his sketch of Rafinesque in "An Eccentric Naturalist." His description of Daniel Boone, whom he met in the lands acquired under the Louisiana purchase, and the tale of the great

hunter's last visit to Kentucky as narrated by himself, is interesting. The prose itself in which these episodes are rendered is often vivid, agreeably simple, but without distinction.

* * * * *

A jotting from Walter Scott's journal (quoted in Herrick's "Audubon") gives us the man himself as he appeared to the author of "Waverley."

January 22 (1827).—A visit from Basil Hall with Mr. Audubon, the ornithologist, who has followed that pursuit by many a long wandering in the American forests. He is an American by naturalization, a Frenchman by birth; but less of a Frenchman than I have ever seen—no dash, or glimmer, or shine about him, but great simplicity of manners and behaviour; slight in person, and plainly dressed; wears long hair, which time has not yet tinged; his countenance acute, handsome and interesting, but still simplicity is the prominent characteristic.

Sir Walter's impression of the man's work, as recorded after a second visit, two days later, is also notable, for it hits upon the qualities which all must agree are dominant there.

January 24. Visit from Mr. Audubon, who brings some of his birds. The drawings are of the first order—the attitudes of the birds of the most animated character, and the situations appropriate. . . . The feathers of these gay little sylphs, most of them from the Southern States, are most brilliant, and are represented with what, were it not connected with so much spirit in the attitude, I would call a laborious degree of execution. This extreme correctness is of the utmost consequence to the naturalist, but, as I think (having no knowledge of *vertu*), rather gives a stiffness to the drawings.

Such extreme accuracy is no longer of consequence to the naturalist. Elaborate systems of measurement,

records and "made skins" in endless series, replace such means of identification. Anatomical studies, siftings of expert reports on regional distribution, correlation of external color with climatic "life zones"—these and other expedients fix a gulf between an artist's perception and a naturalist's description of birds.—In any case, the novelist's expression "these gay little sylphs," shows how directly and rightly Audubon's figures appealed to him. That casual metaphor will endear the veteran writer to lovers of birds, who themselves have seen how much of the sprightly life of our warblers and daintier flycatchers has been transferred to the plates of the "Birds of America." It is, as our sober scientist, Coues, justly described it, "an incomparable work."

The man who, refused in America, went to England to perpetuate it, has given this description of the park-like places he saw there, and of the impression they made on his wilderness-bred mind:

> Immediately opposite Mr. Roscoe's dwelling is a pond, where I have not yet seen a living thing, not even a frog. No moccasin nor copper-headed snake is near its margin; no snowy Heron, no Rose-colored Ibis ever is seen here, wild and charming; no sprightly trout nor waiting gar-fish. . . . No! I am in England, and I cannot but long with unutterable longing for America. . . . I walked to Liverpool, and more than once my eyes were shocked whilst crossing the fields, to see signs with these words: 'Any person trespassing on these grounds will be prosecuted with the rigor of the law.' This must be a mistake, certainly; this cannot be English freedom and liberty, surely. Of this I intend to know more hereafter; but that I saw these words painted on boards there is really no doubt.

# THE SECOND GROUP OF AMERICAN NATURISTS

# HENRY DAVID THOREAU

IN 1635 the first plantation of the Massachusetts Colony was settled at Concord, on land bought from the Indians by Major Williams of Kent. The attraction was the great meadows through which the slow river creeps—the Musketaquid of the Indians—with its border of dwarf willows, and its belt of maples and alders overrun by the American wild grape.

Of that grape (from a mutant seedling) a Concord gardener produced the famous variety of that name, better known than any other native grape produced for the table in the United States. From the woods where the grape grew, and from the ground trodden by Tahattwan and his Massachusetts Indians, one Henry Thoreau, a word-gardener and planter, produced a new flavor in prose. While the grape is better known in markets, it is the books that have made the Concord river and woods known to word-fanciers in the reading world.

Yet it was not the slow flow of river, the cranberry bogs, tangled wood and wild pastures about it that he wished to make immortal, but something more of which he had intimations. "Henry talks about Nature"

(I quote Sanborn on this episode) "just as if she'd been born and brought up in Concord."—And where else, Mrs. Hoar, should she have been born or brought up to better advantage? Give her a torrid climate and the monsoons, she grows rank and overpowering, reeks with poisons and pythons, so that men flee from her and conceive happiness as annihilation, bliss as Nirvana. No. Give us the healthy frosts of New England; pastured rocks, ponds, haunts of grouse and bittern. Not bread-fruits and banyans, but Sassafras, and the American Crab (Pyrus coronaria). We can grow maize as we need it. But we need more than corn to live by.

We want no dark, exotic jungle-wanton, but a spare silent nymph named by the Concord folk *Nature*. It was she that fed them when the corn-bins of Puritanism were failing.

We want this earth-spirit of New England, but we want it untamed, and we appoint Henry Thoreau custodian of this wildness; or rather, he is self-appointed.

Service-berries, poke-weed, juniper: Asa Gray shall tell us their botanical names but you, Henry, shall evoke their spirits, their aromas; evoke the sounds and hues that went with them from the early jingle of the song-sparrow to the last cricket chirp in autumn; evoke the color and motion—of the blue-bird, "an azure ray," and "the first flock of geese . . . beating to north, in long harrows and waving lines." Word-gardener, you shall give them room when the town

crowds, you shall find them permanent habitations, in a kingdom known to yourself, where "summer's eternity is ushered in by the cackle of the flicker among the oaks on the hillside, and a new dynasty begins. . . ." —shall we say, with you as vice-gerent?

It is an august office, but the regalia you wear is not imposing: "strong gray trousers, to brave shrub-oaks and smilax, stout shoes. . . ." hob-nailed; altogether rough clothes that might fit a longshoreman. And yet "Nature" prefers you! Has she never learned that it is the fashion to wear trousers with creases? She has—and despises it. Never fear, she has a sophistication beyond all that, and Henry shares it. It is you and I that are likely to appear outlandish in her demesne, however tailored and fitted.

And don't forget, this Eleusinian garden of which Thoreau is the great initiate, is also a water-garden. On its shores grow snake-head (Chelone) and trumpet weed, in the shallows, white-blossomed arrow-head, still farther out, the Nymphaeas. In the stream itself its warden has tenderly established, not exotic and double-finned monsters but native fresh-water fishes. The bream or sun-fish nest there "assiduously brooding" through an eternal summer of this pleasant prose. Clearly his favorites (and who that knows them wonders at it?) he stands over them by the half-hour, stroking them familiarly without frightening them, suffering them to nibble his fingers harmlessly, and noting the constant sculling motion of their fins

which, he thinks "is exceedingly graceful, and expressive of *their humble happiness.*"—The italics are mine, but the phrase is his, and all of Thoreau is in it. He is the warden of a New England Eleusis, and they are happy who have passed the first purification and can enter the second or seeing phase, the τελετῆς παράδοσις (teletes paradosis) or mystic communication.

For—and why conceal the fact—this uncouth rustic, this long-coated peddler of curious wares is a natural mystic of the first order. Harvard boys who see him pass silent to and from his classes find him "cold and unimpressionable." That is because he carries a far deeper fire than warms their surfaces. He has it not from any Harvard contact but direct from the gods themselves. To the Greeks, Demeter and Kore; to him nature, or Nature, and without superstition. That is the supreme fact for him, through a lifetime.

Biographical facts do not seem very important here, not very pertinent. They shape the boy, doubtless, and start the youth as a historic figure in Concord; but the man shakes them off, somehow, floats free from them. Give him his element—which is always nature—and he discards them like superfluous clothing, moves away like a strong swimmer, upstream from civilization.

There is material for a first-class myth in this queer frequenter of bogs and marshes. And why no myth, then? The age is too stupid. If one began to

grow, even, there are seven wise men ready to pick it to pieces, to disperse it. You would think myth a cancer.—So we have biographies of meticulous detail. We must know what manner of socks were worn by our hero, and the material and cut of his night-gear. These facts edify us immensely.—However, there are good factual accounts of the man, and to these facts Sanborn adds many personal impressions, including his own. Sanborn's book is authentic, and has the advantage of giving us almost the whole of Concord, as a background. It is, on the other hand, written from a view-point external to Thoreau's and can only give us the outside look of him. Even so, there is material for you here, if a myth-fancier:

> He is a little under size, with a huge Emersonian nose, bluish gray eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy weather-beaten face, which reminds me of some shrewd and honest animal's—some retired philosophical woodchuck or magnanimous fox. . . . He walks about with a brisk rustic air, and never seems tired.

There is color for that view, certainly. Who but a being of that description would have divined and shared "the humble happiness" of fishes?

Sanborn's view was external, as Lowell's was, and for the same reason. No urban gentleman and scholar, as such—no man peculiarly "of letters"—could clearly discern the warden of a Concord Eleusis; observe his secret shrines and the flame in them. Nature herself is opaque, or decorative, not even coy to the

approach of a scholar, but statuesque, frozen. Let down all the bars you please, push through pastures, thickets, you shall see nothing relevant till you have lost that view-point.

Bazalgette's "Thoreau" [1] was better, because written with intuitive understanding of something behind the meager details of this life. As he himself said in a note, it was a "portrait-study" and was inspired, not by a less exacting desire for the truth, but by his awareness "that behind this truth there was perhaps another, less often sought for, but no less moving after these vanished years."

There is, certainly, another; and to those who miss it altogether it must seem an incredible thing that importance is attached to the life or to the writings of Henry Thoreau. An English poet of the unquiet sort, who needs that inner Walden spirit (not the philosophic formula) more than anything else in life said to me, carelessly, "Thoreau isn't much." There is no answer to be made to a remark like that. Neither a restless and heaven-storming poet nor an embittered intellectual can find anything important in *Walden* or the *Week*. They will be looking either for ideas—which they must match with the latest oracles—or for arresting patterns in verse or prose.

Transcendental thought-forms very similar to those of Emerson and Alcott were the glume and palet in

[1] "Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Nature," Léon Bazalgette, trans. by Van Wyck Brooks, New York, 1924.

which Thoreau's kernel was contained. Threshed by the years that kernel separates out; but we still see it in a setting of those ancient coats. The germ of it is all we now need, and a discerning reader will ignore the chaff and husk which, truly, held his special grain, but need not be swallowed as food by us. To say this is not to disparage the thoughts of Emerson and Alcott. They had their kernel and essence too. But as a mold and compressing agent, that idiom was only a husk and container for what is important in Thoreau.

What is important in Thoreau is that he first makes nature "articulate"—if the phrase means anything. I hesitate to use an academic word for it. Nature works up into words. You feel a reality there, not a set of laws and abstractions. That is what it is to be a naturist, and this man achieves it.

With his predecessors the woods-world was an objective reality, as it is with children. The Bartrams collected, named and distributed its trophies. Wilson found in it the spur of a driving ambition. With Audubon it remained essentially the world of a hunter and sportsman in which its most engaging forms, the birds, disported themselves. He was engrossed by their forms, colors, motions, all of which he had the passion to perpetuate.

No one of these knew the interest of the myriad insignificant things that make the palpitant world of the *Week* and *Walden,* or *Excursions.* The earlier group were naturalists, in a strict sense, not naturists

mature and conscious. Nature was either more or less a convention or remained unverbalized.

This being true, it was a pioneer's task that was laid upon him; a difficult, some say an impossible one: to "say the unsayable." The medium chosen was prose, usually. The few poems show high classic quality, but are not central to his message. When not writing what for him was a full utterance in language, he was living it in acts of an out-of-door ritual. To walk or wade by, or in, some stream was an intimate participation in the life of the fields, the watercourses. It was much more than natural history.

Willis left us a pleasing picture of him in an intimate nature act, with a touch of the dramatic about it. Young Willis was boarding with the Alcotts. They all went together to call on the hermit, then at Walden. Note that their host was "tall and rugged-looking"; was even "straight." Was this a boy's impression or did the presence of the four Alcott girls, including brilliant Louisa (author-to-be of *Little Women*) make a difference in his carriage? At least he was in his own haunt and castle. Society (and these were no strangers) could not discommode him.

> He gave us a gracious welcome, asking us within. He was a tall and rugged looking man, straight as a pine-tree. His nose was strong, dominating his face, and his eyes were keen as an eagle's. He seemed to speak with them, to take in all about him in one vigorous glance. His brows were shaggy as in people who observe rather than see.
>
> He was talking to Mr. Alcott of the wild flowers in

Walden woods when, suddenly stopping, he said: 'Keep very still and I will show you my family.' Stepping quickly outside the cabin door, he gave a low curious whistle; immediately a woodchuck came running toward him from a nearby burrow. With a varying note, yet still low and strange, a pair of gray squirrels were summoned and approached him fearlessly. With still another note several birds, including two crows, flew towards him, one of the crows nestling on his shoulder. . . . He fed them all from his hand, taking the food from his pocket, and petted them gently before our delighted gaze; and then dismissed them by different whistling, always strange and low and short, each little wild thing departing instantly at hearing its special signal.

Henry, aged twenty-three, had written in his journal, "all my members and nerves petition Thought for a recess." This play with the live things was one mode of its fulfillment, and it was, too, a little symbolic. Not ideas, merely, not thoughts generated by nature, you seem to hear him say in an undertone, but a living relation.

To get at this—to divine, or guess, or catch it as a kind of contagion, you have to read his works, and they are not clear champagne of the spirit; clarified wine, even. Much is cloudy or unessential; not to the taste of the moment. There has been no rigorous selection.

Taste here and there, skim and dip, choose your own clear spots to drink from in this Thoreau stream and meander. There is no other way to manage. Your own anthology, gathered according to mood and predilection: that would be of real value. Are you irked by classical allusions? Avoid them. They are of Boston

and the 1840's. Nothing of the Concord naturist inheres in them.

This is a serious suggestion. Thoreau cannot be read in the schools, and it is a heavenly dispensation that he cannot. We saw lately that Bernard Shaw laid his everlasting curse on any man that might introduce anything of his into a text-book. Every other New England author of equal merit has been made musty with desk dust, and school maggots have been busy with Irving and writers from farther south. Even Fenimore Cooper has been staled by class-room grubbing. We give thanks that Thoreau has escaped, and that there are still in existence school-boards that—if they had read them—would wish his books burned in the public square. It makes for their protection, as snow and mold make for the protection of forest bulbs. These throw their fresh blooms year by year at the proper time and are for those to enjoy who know where to seek them—by marshes and untrodden fens. Who wants them bunched and ranged with pink carnations and unsexed sweet-peas on the city stalls, sick with monoxide from speeding machines!

Twice it has been hinted in these pages that the man was a cool or a furtive being who eludes all but the most discerning. He is, and he does—despite the fact that his friends, from Sanborn on (See his *Henry D. Thoreau*) wish him thought civil and engaging. That is an indoor Thoreau, who could pop corn for children, fondle kittens, mend the kitchen tap, sing

Tom Bowline with hilarious gusto and even shock his staid New Bedford friends with an improvised dance. The outdoor spirit, the quintessential forest creature, the quaint half-ghostly *Homo in sylvae radicans* escapes them, and can be known only after patient search. Not by all persons: only by those who have a vestige of the nature-root in themselves. That starved, discouraged rudiment his writings coax into throwing new shoots. Much as the wild apple trees he described were pruned down by passing cattle—these will be pruned by our various cultures, if not altogether tramped to death. A Thoreau forest gives them air and checks the correct tame plants we otherwise are. That is their best hope still. More urbane, more facile writers have appeared, who offend less and please more our cultured taste. We have one chief complaint about this hermit and forest priest: that he allowed the Massachusetts culture to pervade him as much as it did: that he conceded so much to the accepted wisdoms, philosophies, natural histories (which concerned his direct knowings scarcely at all); to poetry even, as form.

In good moments he recognized this himself, as when he wrote.

"I do not know of any poetry to quote which adequately expresses this yearning for the wild. Approached from this side the best poetry is tame. I do not know where to find in any literature ancient or modern, any account which contents me of the Nature with which even I am acquainted. You will

perceive that I demand something which no Augustan nor Elizabethan age, which no *culture* in short, can give."

To ignore this confession, to be obtuse to the reality from which it springs, is to be opaque to that essential value which only the initiated find in any Thoreau book: a something luminous here and there, quite apart from what an Englishman called "sweetness and light." Save for W. H. Hudson, who grew through an out-of-door childhood in a Southern America, we should have said that no Englishman went into the woods without taking his culture with him. Coming out he would report it in cultural terms. That is why English poets could not content him, and there is no offense in his complaint, when he of Concord finds neither Elizabethan nor early Victorian poets adequate to his need. Yet he lugged Wordsworth as well as his well-worn copy of Virgil to the top of Wachusett and read them there, in his tent.

The truth is, all finished cultures, while they challenged him, hung like a blight about his spirit, with their sense of completion, of a perfection too much like death. Again and again some line or paragraph of protest betrays this. A like threat from the New England culture he could not so readily observe. He lent his sap to many transcendental blades of green, and they are faded; but as a whole his work is not amenable to the charge or taunt sometimes flung at the Boston immortals, that their harvest was not fruit but autumn leaves. A recent edition of *Walden*

(Everyman's) has gone through its seventh printing and will go into more. "Excursions" has been broken into parts, as it should be, and now appears in small attractive volumes of which "Wild Apples" is an example, meeting a popular demand. Odell Shepard has given us "The Heart of Thoreau's Journal," [3] thereby doing a service few of us could have performed for ourselves.

Even with this last winnowing accomplished for us there is some searching wanted before we find our own nature-root in Thoreau; for it is our own, not his, that we must find stimulated and awakened. Until we experience that inmost stirring, we are mere visitors at Walden and outsiders in the Journal. To those who mutter "Egotist!" under their breath as they read it, the Journal has nothing to disclose.

This moot "egotism" of the man is a habit of mind in one who knows that he can find nature only in himself. He accepts the fact frankly, and, avoiding pedantic circumlocutions, says "I" when he tires of abstractions like "the soul."

When the experience—which is also the *impression*—is immediate he uses "I" and "me." But let one who has walked all day in the spring rain read his entry of March 30, 1840, and in place of that other "I" or "me" he will find himself interposed:

> A long, soaking rain, the drops trickling down the stubble, while I lay drenched on a last year's bed of wild oats, by the

[3] Boston, 1927.

side of some bare hill, ruminating. These things are of moment. To watch this crystal globe just sent from heaven to associate with me. While these clouds and this sombre drizzling weather shut all in, we two draw nearer and know one another. The gathering in of the clouds with the last rush and dying breath of the wind, and then the regular dripping of twigs and leaves the country o'er, the impression of inward comfort and sociableness, the drenched stubble and trees that drop beads on you as you pass, their dim outline seen through the rain on all sides drooping in sympathy with yourself. These are my undisputed territory. This is Nature's English comfort. The birds draw closer and are more familiar under the thick foliage, composing their roosts against the sunshine.

"These things are of moment" . . . but not to folk who are never alone, whose ears are filled with parlor or clubroom chatter, and whose eyes see only what can be knocked about for sport or used for food; to whom a tree is a lawn ornament and a plant a thing grown by a garden or green-house expert; nor to persons who admire sunsets in set phrases, appreciate nature as a matter of etiquette, and always by formula. Thoreau cannot reach any whose judgments of things are formed before the things are seen. Fresh eyes, fresh responses—that is the essence of the man and "I" or "me" mean nothing but that there is a subject who sees so vividly that he is identified with the thing seen.

Emerson hit upon the truth of this capacity for freshness (as something inherent in nature) when he asked [4] "Do you never say, 'Old stones! old rain! old landscape! you have done your best; there is no more

[4] Emerson's Journals (Boston, 1911), under date of Jan. 11, 1841.

to be said; praise wearies!' . . . ? Or, on the other hand, do you find Nature always transcending and as good as new every day? I know, I know, how nimble it is, the good monster. You have quite exhausted its power to please, and today you have come into a new thought, and lo! in an instant there stands the entire world converted suddenly into the cipher or exponent of that very thought, and chanting it in full chorus from every leaf and drop of water." That is exactly characteristic of Emerson, who could not feel that transcendence or freshness unless it was converted into a new notion for his eager mind.

Thoreau could not have written that query and answer. It would never have occurred to him that rain could be old, or the stones and landscape stale. He did not see them as an outsider, or if for one hour in the year, as once at Walden, he did, it was with a sense of "a slight insanity in my mood." Otherwise he was aware instant by instant of a contact and a constant relation which it was a struggle of language to express. Too much thinking marred the expression; and in common with his close friends and neighbors, Thoreau the philosopher thought too much. Thoreau of the impressions was diminished by that degree.

His thought may be full of fallacies—any friend of his should grant that—but his impressions are sound. Here is a distinction which not John Burroughs himself, sympathetic though he was, could recognize; for he made much of factual accuracy and

concrete correctness of observation. These are important, but in a Thoreau wood what matters most is that you take the aroma of the forest into your soul; take the sound and the singing of it from every wing and wisp that stirs; find yourself in that utterance and make it your mouthpiece if you can. That is the clue you get from him.

It is usual to say that the poet in him contended with the scientist. True enough, but "poet" is a large vague word. It was the naturist in him that contended. Nine times out of ten the naturist has lost, as it lost in Darwin, or in Asa Gray. And since Darwin it has taken greater courage to profess a naturist's creed than it took before: to say with the author of "Excursions" (in the paper on "Walking")

> I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows.

The ground of Thoreau's impressions is also the ground of his faith in these things. It is not a head-creed with him. It is an intimate every-day experience dating from a time earlier than he can recall. One does not begin—say at the age of ten—to be a naturist: one is . . . or one is not. But that root or shoot which is in all of us, how easily it is starved and pinched in the most of us—even when science is not a competitor but only the world indoors!

To a common gift of responsiveness, which we all share in some measure, was added in this instance a special gift of the eyes. To a friend he wrote, humbly, "My only integral experience is my vision. I see, per-

chance, with more integrity than I feel." Emerson credited him with more:

> His power of observation seemed to indicate additional senses; he saw as with microscope, heard as with ear trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he heard. Every fact lay in order and glory in his mind, a type of the order and beauty of the whole.

Sanborn, quoting this, remarked that "it was this poetic and coordinating vision of the natural world which distinguished Thoreau from the swarm of naturalists, and raised him to the rank of a philosopher even in his tedious daily observations." But "philosopher" too is a term wide and misleading. This man was a philosopher in act more than in utterance. Burroughs recognized that when he said "Thoreau's thoughts are nearer to acts than mine."

But again, there is the *impression* which marks the naturist, always and everywhere, more than his thought. What is it, and what of it? Why, this: there is in it a quality of art, which sees things not in fragments but in wholes. Again Burroughs felt this when he wrote the full passage from which we quoted the few words about thoughts and acts. As a rule comparisons between authors and men yield but dubious profit, but John Burroughs had had a long life in which to consider the matter, and toward its end he chose to compare himself with Thoreau. In February, 1918, he gave to Clara Barrus a statement[5] which I quote, in part:

[5] "John Burroughs, Life and Letters," Boston, 1925.

"I have a greater diversity of talent than Thoreau. I cover more ground. I have more of the reflective, speculative, top-head, which is a drag on the creative artistic faculties. Thoreau's thoughts are nearer to acts than mine. Yet I am more than his equal in powers of observation. I think I look more intently and lovingly upon the wild life about me than he did. I do not try so hard to read it as symbol as fact. . . . But Thoreau's *morale* is much superior to mine. He has the heroic strain. . . . He loved to go against the current. . . . I cannot turn my back upon my fellows as he did. I am a *solitaire,* but not a hermit."

That allusion to "creative, artistic faculties" comes near the point. But there is more. There was something that escaped Emerson and has eluded Burroughs. He sees *morale* but not the ground of it. Burroughs looked all his life upon his Delaware County hills and meadows with homely affection, as men of the soil do. Affection and usage were not the core of the thing in Thoreau. His fields were for him the air of the universal, and he wished them to. If his passion was not to utter the fact but to "say the unsayable" it was because he saw more than the fact, and common things, for him, were never shorn of their pristine glory—that glory which they had in the beginning, before things were, when creation was an act inclusive of all—excluding nothing as "common." They had that aura about them, as if creation were yesterday, and you waked to the fact of it. He was always waking to the fact, and wished you to; as if his page was always saying, "Why so indifferent, friend? What has dimmed your vision?"

There is in every living shoot or root-tip a tissue called *meristem.* Formless, it produces all inherent forms of leaf and stem-growth. Spring stirs it, and a like tissue in us stirs under the air of Walden woods and the "Journal" of Henry David Thoreau. The air of early March is a good one to stir the sap in maples, and I, who need stirring, still prefer a like atmosphere in Concord jottings. They are my choice of them. And it is because, in youth, I found in wet woods and marshes the cure for civilization; because it was there, in childhood, I first met the American forest, that I respond to a Thoreau page when I find there written:

> When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place—a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin-mould—and the same soil is good for men and for trees. . . .[1]

—or when I find this:

> Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. . . . There are no richer parterres to my eyes than the dense beds of dwarf andromeda (Cassandra calyculata) which cover these tender places on the earth's surface. Botany cannot go farther than to tell me the names of the shrubs which grow there—the high-blueberry, panicled andromeda, lamb-kill, azalea, and rhodora—all standing in the quaking sphagnum.[1]

I find here nothing perverse or alien to my view; and I hear more than the page tells: for in my marsh I hear the veery.

## JOHN BURROUGHS

IN October of 1837 Thoreau made the first entry in his famous "Journal." John Burroughs was born in April of that year.

The "Journal" entry had contained the prophetic hint, "To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present—I avoid myself . . ." and a reference to the spiders in his garret where he wrote: "they must not be disturbed, nor the floor swept, nor the lumber arranged."

At the same age (twenty years later) John Burroughs, a young schoolmaster with nothing ahead, and no definite prospects, married Ursula North, the daughter of Ulster County farmers of English and Dutch ancestry—with a passion for cleanliness and a perfect intolerance for spiders and all their works. It boded no promise of solitude and no ruling passion for it.

"If I live," he wrote to Ursula after they were married and he had returned to his school (while she remained with her parents) "I shall be an author. My life will be one of study . . . I know I must struggle hard to realize my end, to have my name recorded with the great and good. But if God spares my life, the great world shall know that I am in it."

He could never have understood that austere indifference which kept the bulk of the Concord nature-experience locked in a private journal during its author's life-time. As he made nature his dominant interest, he wished all people to know it with him; and he interpreted a nature that all people could know . . . or nearly all. His own kin had to be left out. It was something that could not be helped. Here is his account of it, condensed from statements made to his best biographer, Clara Barrus: [1]

"I come of a race of plain, unlettered folk. . . ."

"They can value in me only what I have in common with them, which is, no doubt, the larger part of me."

"It was not natural to speak of them (his writings) among my kinsfolk."

"How little they knew of what is best worth knowing in the world! How little I myself know, but how much less they knew! My brothers read no books; hardly ever looked into a newspaper. . . . They did not read in the Book of Nature which lay open before them, except so far as their needs and duties compelled them to read."

"Needs and duties!" What naturist ever lived who did not urge the supreme duty of neglecting one's duties; who did not prove that the only things of real value are the things we do not need!

His parents, if they could not help him, would not hinder. In that respect he was happier than the sturdy Scot, his contemporary and friend, John Muir. Chauncy and Amy Burroughs did not, through life, load him with reproaches and claim him, body and

[1] In "Life and Letters of John Burroughs," Boston (Houghton Mifflin) and New York, 1925.

spirit, for the service of a Hebrew God. They accepted him as a different sort, in all matters of "larnin." He and they kept contact in homely matters of produce and the farm.

To understand Burroughs' contribution to a literature of nature requires some knowledge of background and biography; far more than is the case with Thoreau. One springs full-fledged from the brain of Concord, armed like Minerva, and into the market-thoughts of men carrying transcendental war. The other springs from the homely mind of the Delaware County farm, and reads and grows strong and dexterous in the world of words—not always with a nostalgia for things of the wood-lot and the restful hills; always, when away from them, with a longing for the tilted farms and deep level valley-bottoms.

To comprehend his writings and the place they hold in American nature-literature one must comprehend the man; and to do that—since one can no longer walk up to the porch of Slabsides and be welcomed there as a human being, regardless of rank or worldly estate—one must look a little into his life.

His own farm-folk, as he said, are a large part of him. You find them in the "Life and Letters" already referred to: old Chauncy Burroughs, rural English simplicity and guilelessness, done into physiognomy, to the life; and his dim religious mind writing to John in 1875 (who was then in his prime),

I am a poor wore out old man I don't expect to stay long

in this country I feel as though I was going to a city whose builder and maker is God my hope is strong in Jesus the fount of every blessing John the Old School Baptist doctrine is near and dear to me as I grow old I am a failable creature. . . .

And mother Amy Kelly Burroughs, from whom he got the Celtic touch of temperament that made it possible for him to be stirred out of the ancestral slumber of the rural mind; dark, wide-apart eyes, and a brooding forehead; a face marked, too, with the patience and resignation of an Indian, for the Kelly women knew how to fend for a household where the husband was better at fighting or fishing than in gainful work. It is to John's honor that he regarded them tenderly and without contempt even when he was obliged to say, "To believe as they did, to sit in their pews, is impossible for me—the Time-Spirit has decreed otherwise—but all I am—all I can do—is to emulate their virtues; my soul can only be saved by a like truthfulness and sincerity."

This truthfulness, together with an essential simplicity which he had from them, is the key to the nature-writing of John Burroughs, through an active period of sixty-one years.

In his rapid ascent upward from the inarticulate level of the farm-mind (the clay-shale and alluvium of thought) John had three advantages: a teacher's job—which, to a live mind is always more informing than a student's—books, and *The Atlantic Monthly,* with J. R. Lowell as Editor.

The teacher's job, be it noticed, he shared in common with Wilson, Thoreau and Muir. Even Audubon taught art when pressed for funds. As a discipline in self-expression the job is not to be despised; or for that matter, as a stiff course in self-control. Wise men have always profited by it, and young Burroughs appears to have been wise. Just how crude one can be who yet possesses this essential wisdom is known from his own description of himself—the self of that period —"callow, obtuse, with no social aptitude; given to stuttering when embarrassed; undisciplined, unformed. . . ." An odd episode of this time is his purchase, from a peddler, of a "Complete Letter Writer," and the fruits of its influence in his letter to a sweetheart beginning:

> Dear Madam,
> It was a question among the stoics whether the whole of human life afforded more pleasure or more pain.

This was matched, his biographer tells us, by one from Mary commencing:

> I at last find myself in the attitude to address a few scattering thoughts to you through the medium of a pen.

Nothing came of this stimulating correspondence, but it shows the intellectual level at which John began his difficult ascent.

A year later, at the Ashland Collegiate Institute he had a taste of the humanities, and we find him penning a book list with a large infusion of philosophy

in it, besides history, essays, poetry and books of travel; a really ambitious list of works that "I *will* read." But the meat of this early experience with literature, as a feeding and forming influence, is revealed in his *Egotistical Chapter* in "Indoor Studies," where he tells of buying the whole of Dr. Johnson's works at a second-hand book store "because, on looking into them, I found his essays appeared to be of solid essay-stuff from beginning to end." He adds, curiously, that he passed by Montaigne's Essays, on this same book-buying venture, "because they had a personal and gossipy look." So he lived for an entire year on the "Rambler" and "Idler," and tried to produce something of his own, in their vein. One is reminded of Franklin and the "Spectator." Either young American might have done worse.

After Johnson came Emerson, who had a grip on him it was afterwards hard to break. However, that early saturation with the "Essays" and "Miscellanies" was the means of introducing him into the magazine world. His own essay, "Expression" not only won recognition from Editor Lowell, but seems to have served as a kind of catharsis for his own early metaphysical vein.

Then came the *Atlantic* itself. It is a piece of extreme good fortune when a young writer can feel himself participant in one first-class literary enterprise such as this magazine became at birth. (Burroughs was a subscriber to the first number.) True, after the print-

ing of his first contribution there were no more acceptances for five years, but a sense of identification had been established and continued. Once re-instated as a contributor he remained an active one to the end of his days. The later relation was natural and felicitous, but the early one was passionate. The plain-covered periodical was awaited with the utmost eagerness, and its arrival topped every other event of the month. It was his university course in belles-lettres, and in three years of it much of his mental crudity fell away. When at the end of that teaching-reading-writing apprenticeship he went to Washington to be a government clerk he was ready to produce something of his own.

That *something* was not a reflection of all that he had read and learned in the forcing-time between age seventeen and twenty-six. Behind his reading and reflection was the thing-itself, of which a real writer writes. The thing was nature, which others had displayed to him as a transcendental pervasive spirit but which he knew severally and particularly as birds, trees, forests and the seasons of the hill-land year. Confinement in a clerical office brought out these aspects in a memory pageant of his youth. There they are, betrayed by the chapter-headings of his first nature-book:

I. The Return of the Birds.
II. In the Hemlocks.
III. The Adirondacks.

—and so on to the end of it, all variations on the main-themes of tree, forest and the seasons, interwoven with birds.

In an introduction to a later edition of the book, "Wake-Robin," looking back twenty-five years at it, he said:

> I wrote the book sitting at a desk in front of an iron wall. I was the keeper of a vault in which many millions of bank-notes were stored. During my long periods of leisure I took refuge in my pen. How my mind reacted from the iron wall in front of me, and sought solace in the memories of birds and of summer fields and woods! Most of the chapters of "Winter Sunshine" were written at the same desk.

The ordeal of sitting before an iron vault, in a closed room, with "long periods of leisure" would certainly bring out what inner resources and qualities of impression or imagination a man possessed. The most that can be said of them in this case is, they were there. Chauncy Burroughs had no such store of impressions in his mind as he grew old and "failable." John's brothers and sisters had none. The French naturalist, Fabre, once attempted to find some ground either in heredity or example for his passionate bent for observation. After canvassing all known sources he gave up the search saying, "There is nothing in heredity to explain my taste." It is a far more subtle thing than mere habit of using the outward eye. It is a matter of temperament, an inner picture-and-movement-loving quality of the mind, in a case like that of Burroughs. In that of the Frenchman there was a keener curiosity for casual

links in the chain. This last trait, nowadays, leads the gifted observer into a more technical routine called science, and a more strict exploration called research. He must be (and he can be) content with results capable of being stated as propositions, graphs, tables, bionomic data and descriptions, systems and laws.

John Burroughs was concerned with developing a literary species—the nature essay—which, if not altogether new, had been but embryonic in Audubon, and of a different order in Thoreau. The artist-author Audubon had been narrative and popular, and by no means accurate in his account of the woods. The friend of Alcott and Emerson had been Orphic and other-worldly, despite his keen zest for contact with the earth. The author of "Wake-Robin" wished to be accurate, and to correct errors made by Wilson and Audubon when it came in his way to do so; but he wrote neither for science nor for a world above the ken of science. He celebrated the pleasing aspects of a world which he found good; chid nothing for his tameness, and rather hoped the birds would profit by association with man; was inclined to think there might be truth in the saying that the birds of California were silent before man came. In other words he felt a strong human affection for nature and liked to fancy that the affection was returned. If actions count for anything he might claim that in at least one case, that of the American "robin," it was returned; for that bird's record is one of pragmatic acceptance of

the democratic platform embodied in our American lawns.

That Burroughs was clear in his own mind as to what he was doing in letters is plain from a paper on "Science and Literature," which appeared in *Indoor Studies,* in 1889. Most of it will seem trite now, but there is matter in it that has still to be digested by a few of us who still find it puzzling to see how what is true in natural science can possibly be true or interesting in literature. To them poetry is a polite falsification of fact, and a "literary" value is the reverse of a real one.

But the values are literary or nothing, in the Burroughs books. How then could he pride himself on never having (intentionally at least) made a misleading statement about his nature-world? The paper in *Indoor Studies* begins,

> Interested as I am in all branches of natural science, and great as is my debt to these things, yet I suppose my interest is not a scientific one. I seldom, for instance, go into a natural history museum without feeling as if I were attending a funeral. There lie the birds and animals stark and stiff, or else, what is worse, stand up in ghastly mockery of life, and the people pass along and gaze at them through the glass with the same cold and unprofitable curiosity that they gaze upon the face of their dead neighbor in his coffin. The fish in the water, the bird in the tree, the animal in the fields or woods, what a different impression they make upon us!

When this was written Carl Akeley had not brought the fire and impulse of an artist into his chosen field, of taxidermy, and given museum pieces the sculptor's

feeling for life. The taunt is less deserved, "stuffing" is done away with; but the agent of the reform was less "science" than art. If the two converged in Akeley and others who now work in the new feeling, to make our museums expressive of beauty rather than mummified truth, it is a triumph for expression, not for tabulated factual report. An Akeley group said something that science never has said and never will—because to say it belongs in the province of art.

However, the view of this paper is not quite so broadly that of an artist. Its author marks out his own province when he says, "Enjoyment is less an end in science than in literature," and again, "Science is probably unfavorable to the growth of literature because it does not throw man back upon himself . . . it takes him away from himself, away from human relations and emotions, and leads him on and on." The allusion to human relations and emotions betrays the exact point of nature-interest that held the pen of John Burroughs steadily to his theme for twenty-five volumes' worth of work. He had found his woods-world emotionally satisfying through sixty years of pen-pursuit of it; but without falsifying or distorting a single note.

In "Birch Browsings" (from *Wake-Robin*) we have a youthful guide showing us through two days of tussle with unspoiled woods and mountain to and from an unfrequented lake. As we read down the successive volumes we have a maturer and finally a patri-

archal guide, but still one who finds a fresh delight in the things he sees. That is his secret, and one worth learning.

"Pepacton," "Fresh Fields," "Signs and Seasons," "Riverby," "Far and Near" and a score more of volumes are, as he himself said, "only a second and finer enjoyment of my holiday in the fields or woods." This enjoyment he was large-hearted enough to wish to share. But in sharing it the experience was intensified for himself, and he adds, "not till the writing did it really seem to strike in and become part of me." There is a hint for those to whom these things are vague and passive, or simply outer experiences quickly obliterated: have they ever tried to hold such fleeting impressions in a snare of words? If not, no naturist can be wholly comprehended by them, for his achievement is not one of naïve remembrance but of the art of words. This is as true of Burroughs as it was of Hudson, of whom Conrad wrote, "This fellow writes as the grass grows." Conrad's might be a more deliberate, a more intensified art. That of W. H. Hudson or of John Burroughs was one in which a certain attitude of simplicity *must* be maintained. It requires, paradoxically, real sophistication to write naïvely about the things of the wood. It is an attitude deliberately maintained, just as one maintains an attitude of deference to one's parents; here nature is the parent, from whom the naturist refuses to grow away.

Burroughs will not tempt you to see more than there

is to see; will not challenge you to an intenser, or a heightened consciousness, that you may revel in a world behind the world, transcending it. On the other hand they must be dull indeed who complained (and this happened in his life-time) that they could not see what this man saw in the woods. Burroughs wrote for his time. He was wholly intelligible to the mind of the 1870's and 80's and 90's. The new century saw him carrying on, but swerving a little toward the urge of the philosophic, which had been strong in him and youth, and which he felt was needed once more. In the midst of the drift of mind toward chaotic and purposeless thinking—or rather unthinking, for rebellious uses, whatever might have been thought—he felt that he had an anchorage. And he did have one.

It was not the anchorage of old beliefs. It was the anchorage of fresh feeling for the livableness of life on the earth. In old literatures he had the sagacity to see, not so much a set of antequated ideas but a "dew-scented knowledge—knowledge gathered at first hand in the morning of the world." But he was equally open to fresh vistas in the newer lore; found poetry in Darwin as well as soundness of truth in the "Origin of Species"; found romance in the news about cross-fertilization and its influence on the life of plants.

This was of the native flavor of nature. It had the tang of truth. With a spurious romance, a veritable infection of mythical nature-story such as broke out between 1903 and 1907, he had no patience. It roused

and angered him. It was an affront to his simplicities and faith in nature as she is. He fought it in "Real and Sham Natural History" ("Atlantic," 1903) and other papers. Leaders among scientists, editors and educators supported him. It was only a controversial and passing phase of his life-work.

He will be remembered not for his defense of veracious nature-writing, or his philosophy of nature, but for his power to see freshly and report well.

# JOHN MUIR

OF three or more distinct Muirs I shall select one, and that not the one he himself was most apt to talk of in his later years. To John Burroughs, meeting him when both men (they were a year apart in age) were on the verge of sixty, he told "his famous dog story (almost equal to 'Rab and his Friends')." Burroughs spoke of it, adding, "and you get the whole theory of glaciation thrown in." To Leon Dawson, canvassing for his monumental work "The Birds of California," the old man told stories of his inventive boyhood and youth, with its clocks and contrivances for waking and throwing one out of bed at a given hour, and for serving text-books in rotation, each opened at the proper place. These things are all well told in "The Story of My Boyhood and Youth," "Stickeen," "Life and Letters" or other biographical material. They belong to the past.

Muir the mechanical genius explains nothing of Muir the naturist; rather contradicts him. His gift of anecdote was notable, and Burroughs found his talk more entertaining than the work of his pen; but it is the pen that will live. Take away the humorous banter, the fervor, the sparkle and easy flow of his conversation you still have something, imperishable and serene

and satisfying preserved in his prose. There he does not seek to divert you, or dazzle, or even persuade you but gives you those simplicities which are so like the very air of the Sierras that you are persuaded he has no conscious art.

It was unconscious, naïve, at the first; was impulsive even when mature. We have proofs. The first is from a childish period when, I suppose, nature is at least faintly alive as an experience, in all of us. There was certainly nothing, at that time, to distinguish ten-year-old John Muir from Willie Chisolm or Bob Richardson of the same age. All three sought birds and nests and listened with enthusiasm to the skylarks; but one remembered and recorded the fact.

> Oftentimes on a broad meadow near Dunbar we stood for hours enjoying their marvellous singing. . . .
>
> To test our eyes we often watched a lark until he seemed a faint speck in the sky and finally passed beyond the keenest-sighted of us all. "I see him yet!" we would cry, "I see him yet" . . . as he soared. And finally only one of us would be left to claim that he saw him. At last he, too, would have to admit that the singer had soared beyond his sight, and still the music came pouring down to us in glorious profusion, from a height far above our vision. . . .

—and he dilates on the power of flight, the power and richness of the song. The next is from a period when galling and almost stunting farm-labor at the first Wisconsin homestead was relieved by refreshing contacts and penetrating observations of wild animals and birds—the frozen spermophile that would not revive by hearth-heat as the frozen pickerel had done; the flock

of quail found frozen in a circle in the thicket, where they had packed for warmth; the gray squirrel kept clandestinely in the spare room—a wealth of reminiscence, from which I quote only one.

> Once I found a poor snipe in our meadow that was unable to fly on account of difficult egg-birth. Pitying the poor mother, I picked her up out of the grass and helped her as gently as I could, and as soon as the egg was born she flew gladly away.

The next is more illuminating because from a mind more mature, more imaginative which, at the age of twenty-five, has been quickened by a chance encounter with a botanist on the steps of North Hall. (A few words from M. S. Griswold, anent the relationship of the locust tree, whose blossoms hung over their heads as they talked, wakened an interest that never flagged through the remainder of his days.) About a year after that incident he wandered alone, in the forests of Canada, equipped as a plant-student and financed by a few dollars earned in summer work at his brother-in-law's farm. The interest in botany is not surprising. That he should take his interest in the shape of an enthusiasm was like him. But no collector's infatuation with strange plants, and no student's enthusiasm for new species and names accounts for the tenor of this memorandum on an orchid which Gray's Manual, in the chaste language of pure science, describes as having "sepals and petals similar, ascending, spreading oblong-lanceolate, acute, magenta-crimson, rarely

white." In contrast, the intensity of this nature-experience for young Muir, his naïveté in describing it, will appear so incomprehensible to many that it seems almost wiser to pass it by as private lore; yet of what use are words of a naturist unless they reveal nature as perceived by him—person and mind, with emotions intact, not sterilized and processed by an intellectual cult? It had been a long lonely ramble in an arbor-vitæ and tamarack swamp, with much wading of bogs and difficult forcing of tangles among heaps of fallen trees. Faint and hungry, fearing he must pass the night among these glooms and windfalls, almost at sun-down he met his charmer, a flower named after the Grecian nymph:

> I found beautiful Calypso on the mossy bank of a stream, growing not in the ground but on a bed of yellow mosses in which its small white bulb had found a soft nest and from which its one leaf and one flower sprung. The flower was white and made the impression of the utmost simple purity like a snowflower. No other bloom was near it, for the bog a short distance below the surface was still frozen, and the water was ice-cold. It seemed the most spiritual of the flower people I had ever met. I sat down beside it and fairly cried for joy.
>
> It seems wonderful that so frail and lowly a plant has such power over human hearts. This Calypso meeting happened some forty-five years ago, and it was more memorable and impressive than any of my meetings with human beings except Emerson and one or two others.

We read the account as a reminiscence, but feel it as a present thing. Such experiences, on the face of them trifling and sentimental, are in reality unforgettable and lose none of their immediacy by an inter-

val of forty-five years. After this episode with Calypso, John Muir *Odysseus* walked to the Gulf, out of pure exuberance and will to know his world. Thence to California by boat.

Sheer physical exuberance marks much of the early writing done in California. Cautious folk have a right to discount it, since health and a state bordering on intoxication—Muir was particularly susceptible to the bracing air of the mountains—are not guarantees of that serene perception which we look to a naturist to share. However, this writing was for his friends, or it went down in his journal, and was only published when the demand for all of Muir became keen. Thus, "My First Summer in the Sierras" did not appear in print till 1911, built of journal notes.

That journal was not all enthusiasm either. Sobered by the privations of sheep-herding John Muir was obliged to write, on June 3rd, 1869, of "the poor dust-choked flock," and a few days later, of himself, in a tone not like the newly arrived immigrant, inspired by the mere act of breathing, after having lived "for nearly thirty years on common air." Instead we find, after a month's unrelieved diet of mutton,

> July 7.
>
> Rather weak and sickish this morning, and all about a piece of bread. Can scarce command attention to my studies, as if one couldn't take a few days saunter in the Godful woods, without maintaining a base on a wheatfield and gristmill.

In the years that followed Muir never complained

of want or weakness if he could have bread. "Just bread and water and delightful toil is all I need" expressed him well. But the toil, it appears, must be either in or concerned with "the Godful woods," whose quality he feels so securely even when sick with the unaccustomed flesh of sheep.

Writing, as we noticed before, was not easy for him, and could therefore be called a toil. That it was performed faithfully and with honest fidelity not merely to fact but to finer feeling, is what we should expect. That it would have enduring value and a quality unknown to ordinary literature of "travel and exploration" is perhaps more than we had cause to hope.

Up to the time of Emerson's visit Muir had not become known as a writer.

It was not his vocation. So far as he knew, he had none. It should have troubled him. It troubled his friends. To him Emerson himself wrote (acknowledging letters and a gift of fragrant incense-cedar flowers):

> I have been far from unthankful—I have everywhere testified to my friends, who should also be yours, my happiness in finding you—the right man in the right place—in your mountain tabernacle and have expected when your guardian angel would pronounce that your probation and sequestration in the solitudes and snows had reached their term, and you were to bring your ripe fruits so rare and precious into waiting society . . . also, solitude, who is a sublime mistress, is an intolerable wife. So I pray you to bring to a close your absolute contract with any yet unvisited glaciers or volcanoes, roll up your drawings, herbarium and poems and come to the

Atlantic coast. Here in Cambridge Dr Gray is at home, and Agassiz will doubtless be, after a month or two, returned from Terra del Fuego—perhaps through San Francisco—or you can come with him. At all events, on your arrival, which I assume is certain, you must find your way to this village, and my house. And when you are tired of our dwarf surroundings, I will show you better people.

I send you two volumes, collected essays, by book post.

It is interesting to see this contact between them, and the esteem which the letter shows; between Emerson, who had known so much of Thoreau, and Muir, drawn by solitude in much the same way. Perhaps Emerson mistook his new friend's affinities when he aligned him with Asa Gray and Agassiz.

Muir was then thirty-three years old, and Emerson sixty-eight. Not till two years later did John Muir undertake his first extended engagement to write. Only after the memorable Kings-Kern-Tahoe excursion over a thousand miles of wilderness, and major mountain-climbings, did the first of his Sierra studies appear; in the "Overland Monthly," in May, 1874. This, and the six following and consecutive "Studies" may be said to have launched him as a writer.

Of the peculiar and very personal difficulty to him, of the task, we learn something from a letter to Mrs. Carr, written about this time. It was she that had urged upon him the writing of "Studies in the Sierras."

His affinities, as hinted earlier, were not with the scholarly Gray or the genial Swiss biologist. Imagine either of those two men making a complaint like this:

Book-making frightens me because it demands so much artificialness and retrograding. Somehow up here in these fountain skies (of Yosemite) I feel like a flake of glass through which light passes, but which, conscious of the inexhaustible sun, its fountain, cares not whether its passing light coins itself into other forms or goes unchanged—neither charcoaled nor diamonded! Moreover, I find that though I have a few thoughts entangled in the fibers of my mind, I possess no words into which I can shape them. You tell me I must be patient and reach out and grope in lexicon granaries for the words I want. But if some loquacious angel were to touch my lips with literary fire, bestowing every word of Webster, I would scarce thank him for the gift, because most of the words of the English language are made of mud, for muddy purposes, while those invented to contain spiritual matter are doubtful and unfixed in capacity and form, as wind-ridden mist-rags.

The artist in a Muir who could write that was scarcely yet born, was in swaddling clothes, but with a young fist that gripped his enemy as infant Hercules the snakes. And what was this paralyzing foe? *Animal utterance* is the name I propose; and if two serpents, then *mechanical speech.* A creeping utterance could not content him, nor the "angular factiness" of a botanical language. He caught meanings above calculation and contrivance; but he did not yet know the transforming power of art upon words.

His best meanings would never be caught. They were above speech, as all must know who have been alone and glad in the high mountains, whether of California or any other land. One may think like an archangel, then—and fail of words. But this same Muir, who despaired of expression had already learned more than

he was aware. Long and free-flowing thoughts on paper, to his friends, had taught him those essentials where lay his special writing-grace and charm. To Mrs. Carr, especially, he had written his most intimate joyousness in the presence of Sequoias, glaciers, falls. To McChesney he wrote with facetious exuberance; even dared to write of moonshine to Asa Gray. But the letters to Mrs. Carr, recording as they did a spiritual evolution, sometimes attained a level of literature in themselves; as when (working, like Emerson, to wean him from his mountains) she wrote disparagingly of glaciers and of ice. Not divining her ulterior purpose he was tempted to be annoyed—he could not be angry—and rallied warmly to the defence of ice-sheets and the age of cold:

> But glaciers, dear friend—ice is only another form of terrestrial love. I am astonished to hear you speak so unbelievingly of God's glorious glaciers. "They are only pests" and you think them wrong in temperature, and they lived in "horrible times" and you don't care to hear about them "only that they made instruments of Yosemite music." You speak heresy for once, and deserve a dip in Methodist Tophet, or Vesuvius at least.
>
> I have just been sending ice to LeConte, and snow to McChesney and I have nothing left but hailstones for you, but I don't know how to send them—to speak them. You confuse me. You have taught me here and encouraged me to read the mountains. Now you will not listen; next summer you will be converted—you will be iced then. . . .
>
> You like the music instruments that glaciers made, but no songs were so grand as those of the glaciers themselves, no falls so lofty as those which poured from brows, and chasmed mountains of pure dark ice. Glaciers *made* the mountains and ground corn for all the flowers, and the forests of silver fir,

made smooth paths for human feet until the sacred Sierras have become the most approachable of mountains. Glaciers came down from heaven, and they were angels with folded wings, white wings of snowy bloom. Locked hand in hand the little spirits did nobly; the primary mountain waves, unvital granite, were soon carved into beauty. They bared the lordly domes and fashioned the clustering spires; smoothed godlike mountain brows, and shaped lake cups for crystal waters; wove myriad mazy cañons, and spread them out like lace. They remembered the loud-songed rivers and every tinkling rill . . . saw all the coming flowers, and the grand predestined forests. . . .[1]

Was ever geological hypothesis of glacial erosion so unglacially expressed? The "Letters," which Dr. Badè has so ably edited, are full of illuminations like this. From them we know more of the personal, spontaneous, heightened and intensified Muir than we could know from any other written source.

It is pretty certain that the things Muir longed to say in his heightened person are things the world does not care to hear. The many, so far as they read him, read to hear of adventures of grandeurs, of playgrounds and the wild life in the nation's sublimest woods. The few who care for more and finer food discover it in imagery and metaphor and prose rhythms.

But he wished both to enjoy and to give, more than that. He had a grand passion for the planet Earth, the "fountained" sky. He could and did experience this object of his passion with a complete, a *quasi* physical response; but in responding he spiritualized even the

[1] "Life and Letters of John Muir," Wm. Frederic Badè, Boston and New York, 1924.

muscular sense. It taught him to cross rock-faces of danger where his brain told him it would be folly to seek a hold; thus he forgot all such things as physical fear and made a comrade of the tissues and nerves of his frame. But he taxed them, too. Three days' climbing he would do in a day. When bread was wanting his body went unfed. Where night overtook him he slept, despising the hardship of summit cold. He was a spendthrift of the spirit and of the physical flesh, equally.

And what came of it? It is hard to know. I have not heard that the citizens of Dunbar, Scotland, have erected a monument to his memory, as those of Paisley did for another naturist who won fame in the States. Wilson's achievement (and the very name "American Ornithology") savors of erudition, which the Scotch have always admired. It would be difficult to persuade a body of burgesses to vote funds to commemorate some good and graceful volumes in praise of forests and of icy fields.

We can spare the kind of commemoration that rears monuments. There is something about John Muir that challenges. He is not John the Divine but John the Baptist—curiously reminiscent of a "voice crying in the wilderness," facetious though his language sometimes is:

> Come to these purest of terrestrial fountains. Come and receive baptism and absolution from civilized sins. You were but sprinkled last year.

A strange character, and a little wild, a little angelic; never has lost that young rapt look the face wore in 1870 when he set out on his Odyssey: a child in his eyes—and he a man of thirty-three. And why went he out into the wilderness? To live a life, not serve in a prison all his years . . . serve wheels.

Muir's enduring contribution to literature belongs to his middle life, his period of poise. Separate from the work of this period any merely popular papers and journals of adventure, any light descriptive sketches such as those contributed to the "San Francisco Evening Bulletin," in the summer of 1877 ("Mormon Lilies" and "The San Gabriel Mountains" are examples.)

But among the papers written for the "Bulletin," or for the "Overland Monthly" one comes upon superior work. "Nevada's Dead Towns" ("San Francisco Evening Bulletin," Jan. 15, 1879) rises to the level of literature, not merely as diction but because of a grave sweep of the imagination gathering past and present into one view. And in "Wild Wool" ("Overland Monthly," 1875) one finds a true and fine essay, not only freighted with original and fresh observation but full of penetrating comment on nature and culture. It is the work of a thinker, and not of an enthusiast. For lucidity and illumination it reminds us of essays by Thomas Huxley, on the relation between nature and man. Muir's theme here is the wild, contrasted with the cultivated. He wisely concludes that neither one is "better" but the two different and by no means inter-

changeable, to be judged alike, from a user's view. "No dogma," he says, "taught by the present civilization seems to form so insuperable an obstacle in the way of right understanding of the relation which culture sustains to wildness as that which regards the world especially made for man. Every animal, plant and crystal controverts it in the plainest terms. Yet it is taught from century to century as something ever new and precious, and in the resulting darkness the enormous conceit is allowed to go unchallenged."

There are no "enormous conceits" in John Muir, and to bring light in places where was darkness was as much his mission as that of any writer. The light is different, that is all, and brings a breath with it, of out of doors. At times the light is so subtile and the air so rarefied that he seems a mystic, treating nature as an abode of gods.

No doubt Muir was a mystic by temperament, and saw more in mountains, breathed more in woods and waterfalls than it is given most men to see or breathe; but he was one without superstition and, I think, without illusion. The things he sensed were real things, and his whole organism seemed to be sensitized to perceive the reality. His body was like that of some forest animals, alive to light, breath and faint sound; but more alive to the sum of them than animal. Thus, in the falls, at night, brain and sense combined, mind stooped and partook of a physical harmony, which it irradiated with thought. In the swirling veils of falling mist, in

the moon-ray and darkness and silver, he felt presences. What if they were of his own mind's making? That is ecstasy rather than illusion. All this time, and in all his wanderings, he was consciously storing up experiences worthy of one who, in his first journal, wrote himself down as

*John Muir, Earth-Planet, Universe*

He had at that moment no other address, but was to sleep for many weeks wherever night should find him, without set destination, and accepting chances that might easily free him even from the first half of his stated address. In the walk to the Gulf he was driven by unformulated compulsions and by a vast hunger to see and know the warm Southern world. In the Sierras he was at first "bewitched, enchanted." He never wholly outgrew this state which, we agree, is a handicap to calm interpretations of nature in prose.

It is a handicap: and yet those who have never known it cannot tell us much that is humanly important about an earth which, without something of enchantment in it, quickly fades to a workhouse and barren holding in which we, the helpless tenants, are confined and exploited against our will.

There is no absentee landlord or task-master in Muir's world. Divinity is immediate because directly felt. Being so felt, and to saturation, it is often communicable in prose. Do not look there for a philosophy, look for an experience. Be led by Muir and you

may hope, if you yield to the leading, to walk, sometimes, with his awareness, in "the Godful woods."

It takes something more than, or other than literary criticism to find and assay the chief values of John Muir's prose. In part, it takes knowledge and appreciation of that special human variation, in our own evolution, which gives the world from time to time a mutant like Muir, like W. H. Hudson, like H. D. Thoreau. These men are not quite like other men. They have great talent, but are not made to work. Viewed from a quite common angle their lives seem wasted. Even as writers they do not achieve what we think they might have done. We class them as eccentrics. We query what or how much other and more compressed beauty they might have put into words. It is like querying how many wild sheep it would take to give the hired man a suit of clothes.

Muir, like Thoreau, was a lover and word-treasurer of the wild. It was this he wished to show Emerson, and to that end won his promise to camp out overnight; but this plan Emerson's friends overruled. It was typical, and the friends of literature will sometimes send a reader indoors when he might better be *out* in a Muir book. And does the reader know that one of the most charming essays (and satisfying from any viewpoint, however literary) is "The Water Ouzel"? In it much waste of wandering is restored as value, by an art of words. That art, in this essay, loses nothing by the fact that there is behind it a wealth of

experience which could only be gathered through wasted time: endless wanderings through canyons and among torrents and crags with an ouzel ever flitting ahead through the spray and mist or mingling its song with the roar of the stream. For each stream or cascade or fall, its complementary ouzel, "that never sings in chorus with other birds, nor with his kind, but only with the streams." It is a symbol, for Muir, of that perfect adaptation which is also a perfect harmonization. It is the thing he loves, and he loves the ouzel for embodying it in every motion of its alert and active frame; for braving the swirl and danger in perfect assurance and self-possession and for celebrating its life with a perfect song—even though, as he puts it, "some of our favorite's best song blossoms never rise above the surface of the heavier music of the water"; they are there, and he knows it by the motions of the bird's throat and breast.

John Muir is known as a mettlesome mountaineer, explorer, known for tireless endurance in the pursuits he loved best; known for his interpretations of the Yosemite, for his appreciation of our parks and their splendid trees—for many descriptions of things great and sublime in nature: but he has written nothing better than his essay on one small foam-flitting, water-haunting bird.

## OLIVE THORNE MILLER

### An Artistic Biographer of Birds

GREAT apostles of nature in America had something of the prophet's air about them. Audubon, although he preferred velvet to camel's hair, wore strange garments in his rôle of "American Woodsman." Thoreau's were often uncouth. Muir looked a "wild Tom" when he first found the Sierras, and his meat, if not locusts and wild honey, was even simpler. Burroughs was bearded like the patriarchs and credited with a halo. All had a sense of high calling and a mission to fulfill in the Kingdom of Words.

It is pleasant to turn from large gestures in nature prophecy and artistry—from Audubon's elephant folio plates of the wild turkey, life size, from Thoreau's cosmos in Concord, condensed—to a quiet unassuming study of common birds. Mrs. Miller will be found restful after we have taxed ourselves to follow one who holds us at a high pitch of consciousness in all atmospheres, or another who takes cascades and waterfalls in his stride.

Olive Thorne Miller was not perhaps one of our "great naturists." She might be called a worker in

miniatures—portraits of birds. Wholly unpretentious in her writing, she showed what a plain person may do out of a busy lifetime, to have choice experience of nature, and to enhance it (the nature-experience) for those who need some guidance in the ways of the wood.

She also showed what can be done in middle life. Born in 1831, Harriet Mann married Watts T. Mann at twenty-three, and made no books till "Nimpo's Troubles" appeared in 1879. But she had told stories to her own children, with so much of nature interest in them that they gradually found their way into print. They were stories about birds and beasts, some of her own seeing, others not. These and other juveniles would have remained on the children's shelves and we should never have known the pen-name Olive Thorne Miller, as one to be taken seriously by adults, but for an incident in 1880. The Millers were then living in New York. With a bird-lover, Mrs. Sara Hubbard of Chicago, Harriet Mann Miller went to watch birds in Prospect Park. Till that time her observations had been casual. At one stride, through the way of contagion, she left the ranks of nature's outsiders and became a privileged person, an initiate in the intimate life of the groves.

It is not merely that she became an accurate and unbiased observer after that date. Those who read her first true nature-books when they appeared felt a charm, a quality about them quite distinct from that

of merely expert accounts or even of fine essays. These chapters, which were in reality short biographical sketches of bird-persons, were not particularly notable as essays, from an academic point of view. But they were highly distinctive, and those who read "Bird-Ways" today will find what her first audience found.

It is pleasing to be able to report that at least three of the distinctively Milleresque books are in active use in the libraries today. One finds them in the main and branch libraries of Los Angeles. One discovers them even in Hollywood, where no major character described in "Bird-Ways" is to be found. In short, Olive Thorne Miller is read for her admirable approach, her unique interpretation of an aspect of nature; read as literature, in other words. This constitutes her right to be rated a contributor to American literature of nature; to take rank as an original, not at all an imitative writer on birds.

"Bird Ways" was published in 1885, five years after her graduation from romancer to accurate observer and interpreter. She was then fifty-four years in age and perhaps twenty-three in alertness of mind and activity of eye and spirit. As is true of all naturists, her sight was keen and she had the intuitive mind of the nature *see-er*. It is a matter of eye and spirit; of innate sympathetic contacts—as if one had actual antennae that followed along the lines of sight. Her photograph of this period shows a fine face, with keen, arched-over eyes; a good forehead and a kind mouth. Here is a

mother, and yet with the detachment to report without prejudice the acts of the folk she loves.

Her report is most intimate, her manner most familiar. That is the charm of it. Her subject is humanized—but without distortion. We must not forget that. Also, no male observer could possibly have noted all the small significances that give her descriptions of behavior their special *nuances*. Small details, which another would not have thought worth telling, in her hands become revealing; as in a Tchekov story we know from trivial actions—we are not told—what a character thinks. This gives her sketches a fictive interest while they are not fiction.

It is in narratives of this sort that we discover her best work: individual portraiture. She is not saying "All thrushes do thus and so." She is saying, "My wood-thrush does this and that"; and so deftly has she told it that we quickly built from those clues a character for one particular thrush, and are prepared to hope—perhaps to prove, later, for ourselves, that thrushes are not automatons, all (of a species) poured in the same mold and having this and that general habit or stereotyped "reaction to stimuli" according to damnable pseudo-scientific codes.

It is such codes, we may say in passing, that make nature hateful and her (supposed) lore unprofitable. We may be certain that wherever you find a large indifference to the real life of birds or of other wild creatures you will find also a tacit assumption that their

life is all of a mechanical or a physico-chemical kind; or perhaps a vaguely providential one that makes it no concern of ours. These creatures, we dully fancy, were wound up long ago—like the tides and the clouds. They have their place, no doubt; but what conceivable companionship could any one find in them? What possible interest? They are not, one perceives, *real* creatures at all. They are sapless shadows. Is that a true view?

Some birds are brutal. Others, I ween, may be demons, as one I read of in New Zealand. But not sapless shadows. I have met none of that ilk. Among human beings, perhaps a few; synthetic persons, compounded from odds and ends of left-over traits.

Olive Thorne Miller has made of her birds persons; at least individuals. That does not mean that they are reasonable, or even consistent; or that they have conscious and calculated ends. Look for no nature-faking in this patient portraiture. An English song-thrush (in chapter four of "Bird-Ways") rescued from vile durance in a bird-store, perches on her tablet as she writes, "sometimes so closely that I have to pull each sheet from under his feet as I use it." But it was greediness that made him tame; and the familiarities must all be on his side. Our own wood-thrush has a more model demeanor; "one cannot imagine a harsh sound out of that 'most musical throat.' And, aside from fancy, as a simple matter of fact, I have never noticed the smallest sign of temper or harshness."

All of these observations are matters of fact. Fancy comes in only as a coloring of language; not to confuse the reader between imagination and fact. How heavy such narrative would become without it! Fancy is for illumination, not illusion: two quite different ends.

Mrs. Miller's is an illuminated prose. In her juvenile books, and in her telling of stories to children she had gained facility with language, learned how to hold interest without exaggeration or tricks. She had this skill, then, as a foundation for the nature-writing. But there was more than that, there was a distinct gift. Her readers know it, and, if they are critically minded —that is to say, if they care for literary values—they know that her prose often reaches a high level and will compare well with anything in this *genre*. For example, the last chapter in "Bird-Ways" yields this quotation, which is not merely good characterization, it is good essay, pungent writing, full of pith and directness and force.

Next neighbor to the goldfinch is a cardinal grosbeak, a fellow of a different temperament. He is a cynic, morose and crusty. His world is hollow and his cage is his castle, which he declines to leave for an instant, although the door stands open from morning till night. Above all, he is captious on the subject of his rights, and insists on having them respected. To have a bird perch near his door is offensive in the extreme, and alighting on his cage is a crime which stirs him to fury. He despises his restless neighbors, and feels no need of exercise himself. He sits—not stands, like most birds—on his chosen perch hour after hour, leaving it only to eat; and I think that if his food were within reach of this seat he would not

rise half a dozen times a day. His only recreation is music, in which he indulges freely; and his song has a curious quality of defiance in it, quite consistent with his character. His notes indicate a more gentle sentiment only in the morning, before the cage is uncovered and his churlishness aroused by the sight of associates whom he chooses to consider foes. At this charmed hour he will favor his delighted audience of one with a sweet and tender strain, utterly unlike his performances at any other time. A pining captive is an unwelcome guest in this small bird-colony, and the cardinal could have his liberty at any moment. But that is not his desire. He evidently appreciates the comfort of a cage, is satisfied with his bill of fare, and has no inclination to forage for himself. His dream of happiness, if put into words, would, I think, resemble some of the human family—a well-appointed house, having everything to please the eye and gratify the taste within and about it, and surrounded by a wall unsurmountable and impenetrable, even to the glances of the world at large.

This is a gem, and mined from the store of indoor experience with birds as intimates of her own home which Mrs. Miller acquired by relieving birds of their cramped quarters in stores—native birds, that should on no account have been confined. She kept them through the winter, giving them the freedom of a room (which she used as study and base of observation) after she had taught them by a few days' confinement, their proper bedroom and berth. These studies would have been valuable even if they had not yielded such charming results with thrush and cardinal used as studio subjects; valuable to one who, up to that time, had not been expert in this branch of observation.

Let us compare it with the usual technical training. A would-be ornithologist handles a dead specimen or

a skin, that has been "made" (a museum-case specimen, not mounted) and a "key"; learns how to distinguish coverts from quills, nape from crown, cere from lores, and so on; to count primaries, and tell which are emarginate; trace to order, then family, genus, species. He neither knows nor ever will know from this process, an individual bird. Mrs. Miller handled few such specimens. Her rescued captives she could, however, hold in her hands, at need. And she learned them from the first, as individuals, thereby establishing her special field and claim. At the same time, she had leisure to observe their minute appearance, detailed, actions; was quick enough to see the significance of posture in interpreting their emotional states. All this was invaluable training, and made her doubly proficient when seated with an opera glass in some nook of the woods.

It is of course in the open that an observer meets the final test. In this test the outdoor papers are more than average, they are of first rank. Some of these occur in "Bird-Ways," mingled with the bird-room miniatures. Perhaps the best of them will be found in "Birds in Maine," written wholly from direct observation in the woods of that State. It was Mrs. Miller's habit to jot down her points in a note-book, and preserve and use them. This gives her work an air of freshness and accuracy that not all such writing can boast.

But to describe this author merely as a deft and

authentic interpreter of individual birds would be to overlook an element which no nature-seeker can afford to miss. Besides the subject, there is the place. "Place" forms an important part of every notable bit of nature-writing. Consider Muir, consider Henry David Thoreau. "Walden" may be social theory, or a philosophy of solitude—but is it really a book or a place? For all but pedants it is a place: merely that it exists in a sort of heightened consciousness where Thoreau left it, is what distinguishes it from other ponds or scattered desultory lakes. In "Birds in Maine" Olive Thorne Miller takes a woods-nook, etches it in consciousness and leaves it there, on such a permanent plane. Here is such a mode. It begins Chapter II, *Upon the Wood Road.*

> The way to the woods on this Island was by an old road that wound around between the rocks to the top of the ledge, so long unused that it was given over to grass and flowers. Tall feathery meadow-rue peeped out from the bushy growth of alders on one side; white-faced daisies, and buttercups with "tiny polished urns held up," waved over the old wheel-track; while wild roses perfumed the air, and a little farther in—
>
> "Beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,
> The slight Linnaea hung its twin-born heads."
>
> The woods into which the stony way plunged the moment it left the main road were nature's own. She had sown her spruces and pines and birches on a bit of earth almost impassable to man. A jumble of rocks piled in dire confusion, presenting sharp edges at every possible angle, or covered inches deep with soft moss yielding to the feet like a cushion, and all extremely slippery from the fallen spruce-leaves of

many years; trees growing wherever they could secure foothold; dead hanging branches and prostrate trunks bristling with jagged points—the whole impenetrable except to wings. It was one of Nature's inimitable wild gardens—

> "An unkempt zone
> Where vines and weeds and spruce-trees intertwine
> Safe from the plough."

Thanks to the difficulties with which it was surrounded and the little temptation it offered for clearing, it was absolutely untouched by man, excepting here and there in a more practicable spot, where he had made a small inroad. It was a paradise for birds and bird-lovers, though the latter were obliged to content themselves with what they could see on the edge and by looking in.

Up that delectable path was my morning walk.

After such an introduction it would not matter much whether anything else were seen. An outdoor person, exiled from the spruce forests, or captived in town and suburb, could dream himself into the picture and people it with wood folk of his own knowing; creepers, titmice, oven-birds, the rarest and wildest thrushes, kinglets, warblers. . . . This opening has evoked *place,* and stirred a thousand sleepy memories till one hears the hum of insects and the sibilant call of gnat-catchers; sees gray-blue and olive mantles, notes the flitting of furtive forms. In short here is a touch of magic, which gives literature its life and its most potent and enduring appeal.

We concede literary longevity to those who can bring the magic touch into their work. In this, and in her characterizations, Mrs. Miller was at her best. Her explicit guides to bird-study are less important because,

in the nature of things, they would soon be replaced. Technical naming, called taxonomy, and its attendant classification by species and sub-species, are subject to evolution and change, as human possessions are subject to moth and rust. All authentic magic is above such laws of change. To a plodding student of ornithology it matters whether a bird is called *Turdus palasii* or *Hylocichla guttata;* but it matters nothing to one who wishes to know intimately and individually a bird of the kind denoted—a hermit thrush. Such acquaintance may be had in the chapter from which we took the opening words. The whole volume,[1] is rich with like instances, sprightly and full of charm. It is this book, surely, that one would select out of twenty-two volumes by the same author, if but one could be available for the naturist shelf. And certainly it belongs there, by the side, of "Walden," "Wake-Robin" and "Steep Trails"—a usual choice of Thoreau, Burroughs and Muir.

Much of Mrs. Miller's work had to do with the humanitarian movement of the late Nineteenth Century to curb the wanton slaughtering of birds. It is hard to realize today that in that dark period skins of song-birds, or bridal plumages like those of egrets, hummers, or any whiteness or iridescence, were worn on women's hats. Legal protection and the vast change in taste and vogue, in such matters, we owe to efforts like hers, and scores of others, as in the Audubon

[1] "With the Birds in Maine," Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

clubs, throughout the land. These changes prove that the nature-interest, sometimes called "sentiment," is a living force.

We are a little inclined, now, to leave these things to specialists, as we do nearly everything else. But in one respect the nature interest is not like natural history, or the work (since about 1850) of the closet naturalists. These last may be happy in killing twenty song-sparrows to make a series of skins proving that a new sub-species has been found; and the same with any likely warbler or thrush. So long as the tradition in "pure science" persists their work will keep on and will be endowed. But it is not so with the interest we have been considering. It has never been endowed. There is no clear tradition about it. The work of the best writers who have sustained it is scattered here and there in the different departments of libraries, so that merely to locate it makes a long "paper-chase" like the old game. Thus:

I find Olive Thorne Miller in the Science Department, shelf devoted to Birds (598.2).

But John Burroughs, is mostly in the Essays, (American, 814) while William Beebe I track to the History Department where he appears under Travel and Adventure (918.8).

This may serve the purposes of classification, but the essence of Mrs. Miller's "The Birds in Maine" and Beebe's "Edge of the Jungle" is the same.

Why not place all of Thoreau's work under "Travel

and Adventure"? He traveled farther in Concord than most men travel in a trip around the world, and to far better purpose. You may say that William Beebe's writing is done for the purpose of describing British Guiana or the Galapagos Islands. I disagree. By the same token Mrs. Miller would be describing Maine, and should be ensconced in shelf 918.8. Both are really at the same job; and it is the one I work at when a flock of bush-tits (this is in California) flit through my Triflora plum and my Rosy-flowered Iron-bark. They are defining a value too good to lose. It is a human occupation, which only mental introverts (or is it extraverts?) would be willing to forgo. They are naturists. No lordly Foundation endows their truest perception, although learned societies or State-supported laboratories may extend them the courtesy of a wider range in space. A naturist writes for human beings like himself; for persons with fine feelings and emotions, not for devotees of graphs and charts. His writing is of no social value if it is not read, and there would be no readers if we left the field to him—true or not, according to his say-so—and refused to verify, to experience it for ourselves.

This experience belongs almost wholly in the realm of intuition and not that of analytical science. The value is there. It is odd that it has not yet been recognized, and that we have yet no naturist group; that even in the book-shops "natural history" and true nature literature are inextricably confused.

The present paper is one of a number written expressly to clear the current confusion, to place a distinctive American literature where it belongs in the estimate of reading folk; and to indicate the peculiar quality and kind of contribution each important naturist has made.

Mrs. Miller's is clearly unique in its revelation of accurate individual traits of bird-persons, piquantly told, and with real magic of evocation, of the life of the woods as well as of the captive bird-world. The contagion she caught from Mrs. Sara Hubbard she passed on to Florence Merriam (later Mrs. Bailey) famous for her effective handbooks for the study of birds. There are three lives enriched by one enthusiasm, and that influence spread beyond calculation for the enrichment of other lives—for to have the nature experience is to have wealth—and who shall say that enthusiasms are an emotional waste? If they are, let us have Pterodactyls, and have done with birds!

## MAURICE THOMPSON

ROBIN HOOD is a parable—and a good one—of man in nature: man contemptuous of sheriffs, not because they preserve the peace but because the peace is rotten; man in the woods, making health.

Robin Hood recrudesces in Maurice Thompson; or rather in the brothers, Will and Maurice. The second may be the mouth-piece, but the two together, after the civil war, arms denied them, take to the bow of yew. What they do in town matters little. They are alive in the wood. They revive the sport, and much of the skill of archery; of all sports the closest to the life and fiber of the wood.

A "savage" sport? Certainly. Or, the sport of savages. But we need to remember that no primitive ever brought the tackle or the art of long-bow shooting to the perfection it reached in the hands of Englishmen, working the yew. Deprived of it, war became the science and commerce of killing. Sport leaned on chemistry, steel, mathematics; and profit accrued from it. Also privilege. In the Robin Hood legend, man on his merits enjoyed all the health and the goodness that inheres in sport.

Choose your own stave. Cut, cure, shape and trim it. The longbow will be yours, and not a toy bought

for money. You will know at first hand a power that made man master of the wood. Fletch your shafts, straighten, cap and waterproof them. Choose your release and use it. Drive your soul with the arrow. Afterwards reflect upon it.—And now excuse a digression.

Walton admitted "Venator," with "Auceps," to his conversation and company in "The Compleat Angler." Together they witnessed the pursuit and killing, by dogs, of an otter; which beast the fisherman admired, in a measure, but "hated perfectly." Killing is no part of a naturist's necessity, but it seems sometimes a part of his nature. Even a fisherman must kill his fish. If a boy or man cannot find the key to a lost world without reviving the hunter in him, we would vastly prefer to see him hunt with the longbow rather than with a steel arm. It multiplies the chances of the game by ten—in favor of the beast or bird. It calls for greater resource and more initiative. It permits of tackle made entirely by hand, and having an individuality, engaging an interest that no manufactured article can command.

Consider the account given by Saxton Pope of Ishi, the last of the Yahi archers of California. Dr. Pope has left us a circumstantial account of every step in the process of bow-making, by an Indian who inherited from his vanished tribe the pure neolithic tradition.[1]

[1] In "Yahi Archery," Vol. 13, No. 3 of "American Archaeology," etc. Univ. of Calif, March 6, 1918.

He has described, and photographed, every detail, every act and posture, including that of flaking the stone arrowheads. His plate (in color) of the heads made by Ishi, from flint, glass and obsidian, is a thing of astonishing beauty. This survivor of the stone age was a man of artistic intelligence and dignity. About the making of these varied and beautiful objects, and their use in the chase, all the pride and skill of the Yahi tribe came to focus. "Ishi," says his biographer, "loved his bow as he loved nothing else in his possession"; and he narrates how the man was transformed when set down with his weapon at the edge of a forest: [2]

> Hunting with Ishi was pure joy. Bow in hand, he seemed to be transformed, into a being light as air and as silent as falling snow.

That is an admirable pen picture not merely of the last of an untamable tribe of hunters who vanished before the tread of white civilization, but also a picture of that early ancestor who stirs and lifts in us when we "nock" an arrow in the wood.

Ishi has gone to the happy hunting grounds. Dr. Pope, who himself (with Arthur Young) had shot grizzlies in the northern Rockies, survived the Yahi a few years. Saxton Pope stressed the craft of making yew bows, of native staves and for power in forest use. Maurice Thompson has stressed the delight, al-

[2] In "Hunting with the Bow and Arrow," The James H. Barry Co., San Francisco, 1923.

most, we might say, the esthetic of hunting. Neither of these white men had a lust for killing; nor, for that matter, did Ishi. All three had an intense delight in this activity which (in one case by nature, in the other two by accident) had come into their lives.

Many of Thompson's pages describe this intensity of pleasure, nervous, sensuous, which was his in the twang of a strung bow and the hiss of an arrow. If Ishi was nature itself, this white hunter was its interpreter in English: or, if you prefer, its reflector. Not profound, not philosophical, he was a facile writer. Utterly frank, he reveals and confesses the physical nature of his passion, "a shock of delight not to be put into literature." Of an archer's response to the winged thing that passes he says in one place,

> This is compulsion; I could not even try to resist; and without fixed purpose I sprang down from the bridge and gave chase, not to the birds themselves—the pursuit was of two shimmering phantoms, and they lured me on and on—not with any particular desire to shoot, but only to go up the stream, away from the road, into a new untrodden place, where something undescribable, yet very real, something I liked beyond expression, lingered and wavered and shone.

Such is the lure. We all know it. Unreflective, it evades definition. We might wish to describe our ideal naturist in set terms, with fixed purpose before him and no "shimmering phantoms." There would presently be no naturists.

An early photograph of Maurice Thompson shows him dark, ardent, very Southern and with an arrest-

ing quality of facial expression. Some might imagine a touch of the wild in it; as the boy put it in his "Paradise Circle" (a sketch in "My Winter Garden") "Bet ye he's half Injen." But that is only fancy and springs from an impression of eyes larger and more alert than most. Sight is half of a naturist's stock in sensation. Other men are said to be known, like trees, "by their fruits" (in a parable). We might paraphrase and say of the nature men, "by their eyes ye shall know them." Look there for no languor, but look for no shrewd calculation. Sometimes you will see a sadness, but never a hate or a cynical charge against being. Often, as in Audubon, the physical eye is large and penetrating, with a power of sight that surprised even an Indian. Sometimes, as in W. H. Hudson, it is deep and touched with melancholy. One cannot imagine a lack-lustre eye in a true naturist, for his quality inheres largely in perception; not as one might see, absently, with his mind an inner world: he lives much in actual vision. And this was the mark of the young archer: an eye kindled.

* * * * *

One might say of the random sketches and essays published by Maurice Thompson, they are light, they are ephemeral, and will not live. True, perhaps. Not every naturist builds himself a lasting monument in books or copper-plate engravings. If this were the condition and cause of recognition the world would be

discouraged. Of what use is it to talk to me of naturists if I may not be one? Thirty-nine volumes of unpublished journals I may not leave when I depart this pleasant earth, but if I have *well seen* I know myself for one of the company; and there is comfort in it.

Readers of "My Winter Garden" know that when our self-taught bird-man and bowman went to the Everglades, or to the Carolinas, he took Theocritus with him—in the original. This gives his pages an Attic flavor, and Greek sounds creep into the birds' voices. It is a harmless crotchet. His "Return to Nature" is not empty-handed, or empty-headed. And yet one does not feel that he imposed upon nature, as so many have done, the weight of his will or intellect. He drew from it. He merged in it. Whether his contribution is little or great, that is the sign of a naturist. As he can, he gives you the thing itself—not an idea of his, garnished with it. He cannot give you all of it, but only his experience, and that turns about some central proclivity or vein, as Thompson himself wrote of his pathless Southern wood-nooks, "A stream is always the central line, the axis upon which the charming solitude has been revolving through the ages."

His own vein, as we have seen, was to re-enact the rôle of archer and so recover the ways of a lost world; conscious, as he says in one place, of the anachronism and delighting in it and in the sensations of a paradise regained. On this, he is worth quoting:

> The consciousness of anachronism, of being for the time immensely remote from contemporary sympathy, is stimulating. It completes recreation. With the bow on his shoulder, the string lying slack, and his quiver rustling at his side, he lives the life of Arcadia, yet is perfectly aware of playing a part with his own whim for audience. Aimless, wellnigh thoughtless, he treads at random the invisible yet perfectly apparent paths of the wilderness.
>
> To stroll thus is to realize the ethereal. It is absolute relaxation, an unhindered bath in the freshest well of imagination.

This is an experience any man of mind might envy. Emerson never achieved it. His avid mind would always build some new synthesis and his spirit realize itself not in a true Arcadian game (such as the universe is always playing, unseen, in neglected byways), but in an idea—in some new mental construction. So the lesser man sometimes harvests what the greater one misses. It is Emerson's own law: compensation.

Maurice Thompson is not a "great" naturist. Rate him, if you like, as facile writer in the mood of the 1890's; a Southern-bred spirit, active, eager and vivacious, careless of the solemn problems of labor, a little contemptuous of museum-names and estimates of the things he loves. He liked to think of the birds as immortal, never knowing senility, perishing only by enemy or accident. We like to think of him as immortal in the same sense: following the spring from January till June, a human migrant and rover, seeking here a "paradise-circle" and there a bickering stream or slow lagoon. Some accident has befallen him. We

do not see his articles or the old-style weekly "Independent" in which so many of them were first printed. His novel, "Alice of Old Vincennes" is, they tell me, still in active circulation in the libraries. Lovers of the longbow remember that he wrote "The Witchery of Archery," and that the revival of that sport, even as a target-sport, is due in great part to the influence of Will and Maurice Thompson.

If without the lure of the chase (a compulsion of a fascination such as hunting with the bow exerts, or other pursuit of "fleeting phantoms"), we can walk alone and merge with the woods-world, relive a lost ecstasy, we shall not need these clues. But if when we go out we find the field drab and the forest a vacant silence, or filled with extraneous sounds and voices, meaningless to us (stopped at the outer ear, for want of a live listener), then we are in need of these or other lures. This is only one way, and there may be other or better ways; but to go long unstirred and unawakened —that is only a way of dying.

*Biographical Note.* (James) Maurice Thompson was born at Fairfield, Indiana, in 1844. He was taken as a child to Kentucky, reared there, and fought in the Confederate Army throughout the war. Soon after, he visited the Everglades and there practiced hunting with the bow. In 1868 he removed to Crawfordsville, Indiana, and there was an engineer, afterwards a lawyer, then State Geologist from 1884–1888. From 1890 until his death he was on the staff of the "Independent."

"The Witchery of Archery" appeared in 1878. Besides that he published two volumes of poems, "Songs of Fair Weather," 1883, and "Poems," 1892; "Byways and Bird-Notes," 1885; "Sylvan Secrets," 1887; "A Tallahassee Girl," 1882; "King of Honey Island," 1892; "Ethics of the Literary Art," 1893; "Alice of Old Vincennes," 1900. Quotations from his last nature book, "My Winter Garden" (also 1900) have appeared above.

## WILLIAM T. HORNADAY

AS a very small boy I read "Two Years in the Jungle" by William T. Hornaday, described as a "Hunter and Naturalist" on the title page of the book; and today I have a letter from him, fresh from the mail. He is the oldest living naturalist in his group; born in 1854 and fighting yet for the preservation of wild life in our American nature-world.

I felt that the prime mover in the creation of the Montana National Bison Range and the organizer of our Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund deserved recognition in a Naturist's book. To my query asking what he would wish to have stressed as the dominant motive in his life's work, he wrote,

> In the defense of the rights of the bedeviled, harassed, persecuted, murdered and sometimes exterminated wild life of the world I have not hesitated to fight all kinds of personages, officials, and people—yes and legislative bodies also, who opposed wild-life protection; and I have made enemies. . . . My chief object in life for the past fifty-four years has been to try to bring the wild creatures of the world to the human millions who cannot go to them. . . . But as an ethical estimate, my thirty-five years of active fighting to preserve some wild life has ranked far above that academic work.

This is the veteran looking back upon his effort and summing up—weighing its worth. A statistical study

would bear out his estimate; but, first let us take a viewpoint more revealing of the natural man in his early prime, before time and the championing of causes had shaped him as the fiery fighter the letter reveals.

"Two Years in the Jungle," the book that first spread his fame in all boydom, is still in brisk circulation on library shelves. It was first published in 1885, and has run to many editions, in response to a continuous demand. It is of course a book of the hunter and collector rather than of the contemplative observer. The Preface reveals its author as something more; reveals him as dissatisfied with the narrative of his acts. He says there,

> Owing to the circumstances under which the trip was carried out, all my waking hours were occupied in a ceaseless warfare for specimens, and my only regret comes when I think what it might have been, for me at least, had I not been obliged to shoot, preserve, care for and pack up nearly every specimen with my own hands. From first to last I had no other assistance than such as could be rendered by ignorant and maladroit native servants.

Compare this with a modern collecting expedition organized by the staff of the American Museum of Natural History. The wonder is that Mr. Hornaday was able to write any book at all, other than a catalog of objects shot and preserved. The Preface says further—and this is the revealing paragraph:

> He, at least, who loves the green woods and rippling waters, and has felt the mystic spell of life in a vast wilder-

ness, will appreciate the record of my experiences. I love nature and all her works, but one day in an East Indian jungle, among strange men and beasts, is worth more to me than a year among dry and musty "study specimens."

To convey this spell and portray nature as she seems to an ardent man on an East India day is not this author's special gift. We know from William Beebe's books on such themes how considerable a gift it requires, and how delicate a language art. So we shall not look in this volume for belles-lettres or philosophic reflection. "Two Years in the Jungle" is a vigorous and accurate account of the tropical experience of an American who shot, skinned and treated for preservation single-handed, the largest and most formidable of reptilian and other vertebrate specimens for museum use; who at the age of twenty-two was made responsible for an enterprise of this sort.

Such an enterprise demands resourcefulness as well as technical knowledge. Mr. Hornaday was youthful, but not without experience. He had been for two years employed by Ward's establishment at Rochester, and had made two trial trips to South America. His story is not to be despised as an account of hunting—of this particular kind—and shows no tendency to romanticize the simple facts. It is full of information that would be useful to those who follow game trails, and of illumination for a casual reader. It is decidedly entertaining, and not the least reason for its appeal to boys is its way of presenting accurate and circum-

stantial fact. Boys like such fact when it has to do with an unknown world about which they wish to be informed; but not every one can write it without dullness.—But of course the book is in no sense a juvenile. Such a chapter as that on the Gangetic Crocodile is simply straight natural history, worked out from a collector's point of view. The prose is lively and full of humor, of appreciation of the comic episodes which such a trip always furnishes for those who have eyes for it. And one finds in it a good deal of human natural history which is entirely incidental and has value for that reason. For example, here is an episode illustrating the state of public sanitation and hygiene on the Jumna in 1876:

> The boatmen poled our craft along the shore, which was crowded with natives, in the water and out, busily bathing or washing their clothes—a whole mile of bathers . . . and one man in the water, who was neither washing himself nor his clothes. He was dead. He floated there upon the water, naked, bloated, and hideous, with only a few patches of his brown Hindoo epidermis remaining upon his body, which was otherwise perfectly white. Men and women were bathing within ten yards of this disgusting object, perfectly indifferent, and one man was actually fishing within two yards of it. I asked one of the boatmen:
>
> "Is this water good to drink?"
>
> He replied:
>
> "Yes, sir, see, the people drink it," and he pointed to a woman who was filling an earthen jar.

During all this trip the shooting of a crocodile or a tiger was scientific work to the young hunter. His narrative is controlled accordingly. In the years soon

to follow he was chief taxidermist of the U. S. National Museum (1882–90). This too was an aspect of science. In the letter already quoted he alludes to these activities as "academic"; and he estimates his chief contribution as "ethical." By his own confession, and in his own choice of language, William T. Hornaday has been for the best part of his life a champion of the "rights" of animals. It is curious to note that Carl Akeley, the most notable scientific collector we ever sent to Africa, acquired an almost identical view of the existence of such "rights," while Roy Chapman Andrews, who leads in Asiatic exploration defines a parallel position based on the hunter's sense of value in the living rather than the dead denizens of the wild.

We do not look for soft sensibilities in men of this stamp. The ranks of scientific field collectors of the highest executive ability and energy would be an unlikely place to seek for sentimentalists. Common sense drives us to infer that there is something about direct contact with the hunted animals and birds of the world that breeds respect for the hunted, when men of large caliber handle the gun. More and more they tend to diminish their insistence on the value of the preserved skin or skeleton, however well set up, and begin to devise ways whereby the living creature may be made safe in some part, at least, of its original domain. Thus the names of Hornaday and of Roosevelt become synonyms of conservation, and Carl Akeley, while in the very act of shooting gorillas on Mt.

Mikeno is seen to be planning a sanctuary there, where they may never more be hunted.

So much for the man's temperament, preparation and background. To find his overt contribution to the cause he came to live for, we must turn to his stirring volume, "Our Vanishing Wild Life." It is the work of the mature man, a work of evidences, not merely enthusiasms, and still stands as a classic of its kind, in active use today, throughout the land.

The book was published in 1913. It was sponsored by the New York Zoological Society and went out with a preface by the President, Dr. Osborn, who upheld its forcefulness and militancy with the assertion that "the battle for preservation and conservation cannot be won by gentle tones, nor by appeals to the æsthetic instincts of those who have no sense of beauty, or enjoyment of Nature."

Hornaday's text contains ample proof that it cannot be. In his own prefatory pages he remarks that nine-tenths of our protective laws have been made or dictated by those who kill the game, and who are careful to provide open seasons for slaughter as long as there is any game to kill. And then he italicizes:

*And yet the game of North America does not belong wholly and exclusively to the men who kill! The other ninety-seven per cent of the People have vested rights in it. . . . Posterity has claims upon it that no man can ignore.*

What these rights of the living People are, and what it is on which Posterity has claims, has never been

clearly defined; but a hint of it is contained in a line down the page from this quotation:

> A continent without wild life is like a forest with no leaves on the trees.

A revealing simile. And the full purport of it we shall never know unless the rhetorical figure becomes a literal fact. If that were threatened I think any and all of us would fight to prevent it. But Hornaday felt the approaching threat. But for such alarm-calls as this volume there is no knowing how nearly such extermination—such sterilization of the continent—would be an accomplished fact.

Woods—here and there, in the form of wood-lots—may be private property; but we want our forest and we want leaves upon it. We cannot have the leaves without the birds. Any ecologist can tell us that. W. T. Hornaday could and did tell us what was happening to the birds. Six species were already extinct in the United States, and twenty-two were in danger of complete extermination. Not birds of prey. Not dangerous or destructive species. All harmless ones with edible flesh or handsome feathers. As to their flesh, this author pointed out that it was never seriously needed; that in cases where a game bird was threatened it was by pot-hunters mainly, and to tempt the spoiled palates of a few epicures or the jaded palates of a few rich. And where there was a bit of flesh, beauty would not protect them. Thus the wood-duck

could be shot in every State south of New York. Hornaday published their names under the caption "Wood-Duck Eating States, 1912," and the remark

> A number of them have taken pains to provide extra long open seasons on this species, usually from five to six months! And this for a bird so exquisitely beautiful that shooting it for the table is like dining on birds-of-paradise.

The wood-duck is a perfect creation in nature. It is a study in grace and color harmonization without a rival. It makes the wood where it dwells paradisical . . . to those who have eyes. It is a finished work of nature, but the man who pots it for the sake of a few flesh mouthfuls is an unfinished and a retarded intelligence from whose ravages we have to be protected. Such too are the loathsome yokels who are photographed with their necks festooned with ducks—some scores of them about each neck, the product of a day's butchery. The book does them justice.

Here too is specific exposure of the predatory classes. Immigrants of southern European type of whom this writer could say "he is a human mongoose. Give him power to act and he will quickly exterminate every wild thing that wears feathers or fur. To our song-birds he is literally a 'pestilence that walketh at noon-day.' " And again Mr. Hornaday gives the details; not imagined but real, backed by evidence shown in the courts: by the preserved bodies of forty-three robins, orioles, thrushes and woodpeckers taken along with the imperfectly instructed Americans who

had shot them. It was no matter of academic discussion securing this evidence. Mr. G. O. Shields of the League of American Sportsmen, and his deputies, had to take their chances with the lawless folk who thought they had a right to shoot what they pleased.

Much of the depredation is due to sheer ignorance, usually accompanying illiteracy. This does not excuse our legislatures. It merely indicates one of the directions in which the fight must be made. It can only be fully and finally won when there exists a sharply defined public sentiment which is against all needless slaughter of wild life, and against every forest abuse. Without a doubt this one book has done as much as any single publication to form and inform that public sentiment. It is a land-mark and a standing measure of our progress. Those who wish to gauge it may refer to this exposé of 1912.

William T. Hornaday has never felt that his work was finished or his campaign complete. A recent statement of the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund of which he is the Campaigning Trustee, at Stamford, Conn., shows disbursements of many thousands of dollars: for Prong-horned Antelope Preservation, for Mountain Sheep, for Bird Sanctuaries, for a New Alaskan Game Act, for Buck Law Campaign and Bag-Limit Reduction Campaign; besides organizations aided, too numerous to name. It is a good record for one life. One can but wish it extended . . . but as a performance record it is safe.

## THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, reaching out from the White House a hand of fellowship to John Burroughs at Slab Sides, linked our modern aggressive American nature-lover with the reflective-contemplative nature-spirit of a recluse. That the two met and were congenial—Burroughs as guest at the White House, or as fellow-traveler on a Western outing—is not in itself remarkable. They had common ground in their passion for accurate observation and inference, their hate of "nature-faking." In fact it was this last that drew them together. It was the protest of a patriarchal nature-writer and priest of woodland verities that stirred our popular President—that protest against a cult of romanticists, which flouirshed at the beginning of this century, and whose baroque pictures of wild life town-folk mistook for reality. Burroughs for once dipped a pen in acrid fluid, punishing them. Roosevelt read and responded; the two were fast friends thereafter.

The versatile sportsman, reformer, fighter and President was a realist in matters that concern nature. To the last, it seems plain, he thought of nature not as a world to be enjoyed in passive mood, in receptive con-

templation, but as a world to be subdued and ordered. Nature must bend to man, not man to nature. It would be strange to rule this aspect out in our survey of American conservers of wild life. It is American, it is typical of a great body of feeling that can be counted as for the support of any healthy movement for the preservation of all that man may count worth preserving.

A realist in matters pertaining to nature, Mr. Roosevelt was also a realist in politics. Owing to this fact, it was possible for him not only to frame laws for the conserving of our national resources, but to create necessary machinery for the enforcement of such laws. But even this double service could have been wasted but for the sentiment he was able to fan into flame—it had long been smouldering—for *conservation,* so that the word became a slogan, largely through the popularizing it acquired during his administration.—"A sentiment," we call it, but it was not a barren one. Many Americans have not quite been able to assimilate Mr. Roosevelt. They should, we think, be able to assimilate the fact which survived him: the realistic political fact of an awakened national feeling for public lands and public resources. It is not yet wide enough awake—but that argues for more, not less nature-regarding presidents.

Our point is this: here was a man who could give nature, in the shape of forest and game preserves, a political status. Whatever economic motive the major-

ity might have for supporting him it was real woods and watersheds that were kept back from ruthless exploitation. And it is not likely that we shall, for a good many years to come, appeal successfully to legislative bodies on grounds either of pure science or transcendental philosophy.

Here was neither an æsthete nor a stoic; one who had little to say about abstract beauty and less about the passive acceptance of evil or the physical ills that fate imposes; or even of passive resistance to political abuses. His admirers will not be found paying reverence to the Mahatma Gandhi, or, for that matter embracing any ascetic doctrine either Eastern or Western. He was no mystic. Firm-faced though he was against wanton destruction, he found killing *per se* no taint of evil. Consequently he will not be a favorite among sensitives of the newer school. Perhaps his tastes in the matter of sport were Palæolithic. He was a born hunter. How should he not enjoy the charge of a lion, cool in the consciousness that he would infallibly stop it? That too is "nature," and those who love the wild must have something of the wild in them. But in part, his attitude was reasoned. Inability to kill an animal, he thought, "was the sign of a soft head, not a sound heart." And if we killed no game, he argued, how should there be room both for beasts and men on this limited earth-crust? He was for preserving game that all might enjoy the sports he followed with such zest. It can be a reasoned position, and better so than that

it should remain, as it does with so many, an instinctive one. The trespasser and law-breaker are hardly in the same caste with public-spirited sportsmen. I may shrink from the killing of any game whatsoever, yet understand those who enjoy it. Perhaps it is only normal to enjoy hunting in youth, and perhaps with some men youth is perpetual.

Mr. Roosevelt's account of his most notable experiences in this field of sport—in "African Game Trails" —will offend many readers. It will appear both matter-of-fact and crude in its details. And it is a book for hunters, not for nature-lovers. It is not literature. In spite of that it reveals a knowledge of the nature-background that few political-minded men could muster. The book has been forced to carry compressed too vast an amount of circumstantial detail—travel-routes, stops, manoeuvres in quest of game, attacks and consummations. But to our wider nature-interest it makes one notable appeal: in the Foreword. Here, in three prefatory pages our active, our aggressive and sometimes primitive hunter naturalist is lifted, by his deeper feeling, to a plane where he sees the whole field as one vast and moving thing. Nature unredeemed: the African continent. He sees what can be told and what cannot be. Pictures, he evokes, deep-bitten into his own life-texture; conveys somehow their background, "its mystery, melancholy and charm." He has not been impervious to the more tenuous influences. He owns them in retrospect. It is not rhetoric,

it is a confession. Under the seething level of his motor activities the man is a true naturist at heart, aware of "the hidden spirit of the wilderness . . . of the silent places, of the large tropic moons, and the splendor of new stars; where the wanderer sees the awful glory of sunrise and sunset in the wide waste spaces of the earth, unworn of man, and changed only by the slow change of the ages through time everlasting." [1]

If Mr. Roosevelt was sensitive to this aspect of silence and desolation for its own sake, he was also aware of another pageant which such an environment evokes. This shows in his allusions in the African book to an age called the Pleistocene, which was vividly suggested to him by the things he saw moving and breathing in these forests and upon those plains. It shows still more plainly in a later book, "A Book-lovers Holiday," [2] where he deliberately puts this picture on the page, in words like this:

> Often and often, as I so watched, my thoughts went back through measureless time to the ages when the western lands, where my people now dwell, and the northern lands of the eastern world, where their remote forefathers once dwelt, were filled with just such a wild life. In those days these far-back ancestors of ours led the same lives of suspicion and vigilant cunning among the beasts of the forest and plain that are now led by the wildest African savages. In that immemorial past the beasts conditioned the lives of men, as they conditioned the lives of one another. . . .

And while much that this "book-lover" writes is

[1] Written at Khartoum, March 15, 1910.
[2] New York, 1916.

circumstantial and episodic he is still a self-confessed searcher after "wonder and enchantment," eager to exact a further meaning from the world that is reached by wild trails. He has not, himself, the special art or magic to conjure, always, the thing to which he responds. Rather it seems that he leads us to it, earnestly, assuring us that the thing is there.

But when another comes writing with skilled pen, saying the thing as it should be said, no one could be quicker to value it. This tribute should be paid to Theodore Roosevelt; that he was among the foremost of those who perceive and rightly appraise an adequate nature-prose. His account of the new nature literature in a notable preface to William Beebe's "Jungle Peace," [3] is discerning and sure of its ground. It is unfortunate that this preface is not found in all of the editions. It is a document in the critical literature of the subject that engrosses the present book. The part that concerns its immediate subject, a book by Mr. Beebe, need not be noticed here, except to remark that the appraisal is correct. Not the strangeness of the incidents, but charm of form, the evidences of revealing sympathy, are what make the book literature. Of the class to which it belongs, the preface makes this observation:

> Nothing like this type of book was written until within the last century and a half. Books of this kind can only be produced in a refined, cultivated, civilized society. In rude so-

[3] New York, 1919.

cieties there may be much appreciation of outdoor life, much fierce joy in hunting, much longing for adventurous wandering, but the appreciation and joy are inarticulate; for in such societies the people who write are generally not the people who act. . . . In the ballads of Britain and France, and the folk songs of the Russian and Turkish Steppes, there are occasional lines which bring before us the song birds in spring, in the merry greenwood, or the great flocks of water fowl on the ponds of the plains of green grass; but they are merely a few words of incidental description of the land through which the hero rides to foray and battle. . . . Gilbert White and Waterton added in new ways to the sum of achievement of men of letters. Each made a contribution to literature as new and distinctive as the Idylls of Theocritus. . . . The new literature, of appreciative love of nature and of hardy outdoor life, will appeal only to the never very extensive class which neither ignorantly believes that literature is purely an affair of the lamp and the library, nor ignorantly proclaims its own shortcomings and conceit by boasting that it does not value books because, forsooth, it is "too red-blooded" to care for anything except action.

Mr. Roosevelt, in person, added one to that "never very extensive class." More, he supplied a much needed intermediary and interpretive intelligence, linking it with the class to which action means all. Himself a man of action, so preëminently, he could never be accused of traits that the "red-blooded" despise. The lamp and the library were not his gods. But he read to a purpose; not merely with avidity. Nature-writers will remember him as one who brought to them not merely the backslapping hand but the discriminating eye, and a real comprehension of their intent.

Had the science in vogue at Harvard in his day included an appeal to the field naturalist Roosevelt

would in all probability have become a zoölogist in that expert field. The incident of the seal seen by him at the age of fourteen, laid out on a slab in a market on Broadway, and his devotion to its body, form and skeletal possibilities for days afterwards, is a plain enough clue—and so taken in his "Autobiography," where the details are told. He remained an eager amateur, willing to aid, abet and work with others whom he found needing support or encouragement in that special field.

The technical scientist, as such, does not fall within the circle of our present view. It will be interesting however to see what happens when one who has the technical standing of field zoölogist feeds the public interest by a narrative of his days in wilds such as those which Mr. Roosevelt found vested with a more than transient charm and a meaning more than that of "landscape." Roy Chapman Andrews is a man of that standing and with somewhat similar tastes. Let him provide the illustration we require.

## CARL AKELEY

CARL AKELEY was a taxidermist. He was also an inventor, in the strictest technical sense. His basic patents have not successfully been challenged.

Taxidermist and inventor: it is an unlikely combination from which to evolve an artistic genius. Can one invent an art? Apparently one can, if born an Akeley; or if not invent it, at least transform an existing skill into a pure form of art adventure.

At sixteen the farm boy got out his professional card, as taxidermist. At nineteen he presented it at Ward's establishment at Rochester, which seems to have incubated so many geniuses in nature enterprises, and was employed. Not long after he was making (on his own time) the plaster cast of the body of a zebra, which had just been brought in. He worked from supper till breakfast on this incipient new technique and germinal idea. His cast was thrown on the dump, but the idea kept on working. A new art had evolved in the mind of an apprentice to the trade of animal upholstery.

At Ward's, deer were being literally "stuffed." The process was not merely crude, it was unscientific. It had not the remotest relation to any known art. Now

if any man living can explain why a boy with a rustic background and a very imperfect education should have refused to content himself with doing all that his employers required him to do—should have studied skeletal anatomy and musculature, worked with scant encouragement till he devised an adequate technique for reproducing anatomical truth—if any can explain this, let him step forward.

But anatomical verisimilitude and a technique for its perpetuation in practical molds would not constitute a new art. These represent only the inventor and scientist at work. Where he leaves off the artist begins; or rather takes over the work. Akeley was an artist, authentic and unquestioned. President Osborn, of the American Museum of Natural History, is right in saying that he was a sculptor first, and that his taxidermy was incidental. But he blended the two so deftly that no man could distinguish them. There were not two aspects visible in his completed work. An animal preserved in the Akeley way was an imperishable specimen at the same time that it was a sculptural creation, an achievement in art quite as truly as if it were cast in bronze.

It was an expensive way, but no cheaper one has been found or is likely to be. There is where the inventor counts. But even the invention is incidental here. The Akeley camera was devised to meet an emergency in Africa when all the work of an expensive stalking and the high point in an animal picture were

lost by the camera's slow adjustment. The cement gun was evolved to meet the needs of surface repair work on the Field Museum; a matter not properly in his field. Inventor he was, but only in support of some larger endeavor, some artistic vision or dream.

So we set down for further reference the fact that in Akeley we have an American who was a dreamer and also an effective. We set it down with satisfaction. Those first four groups of deer accepted by the Field Museum[1] were only the result of an adolescent dream—backed by determination and capacity for hard work. There they stand, the first fruition; not crude and tentative, but fine, finished and infinitely engaging —especially the winter group. The pose of the buck is as simple as it is convincing. Its complement is the browsing doe. There is not a false note in the creation and the four are a true sculptural group. Of course no technique on earth could accomplish that. It is the artist speaking, in the medium chance has put into his hands. Incidentally it is nature, interpreted by the new art.

This brings us to the theme which is our excuse for writing of Carl Akeley. We have had sculptors, and some have used animal themes. We do not need to bring them into our present account. Akeley had a supreme passion and a life purpose which grew parallel with the development of his inventive genius and his art. It was to mold and fix in permanent plastic

[1] "The Four Seasons."

form the great beasts of the African wilderness in a setting and an interpretation that would be true to nature. To this he gave his best energies, and eventually sacrificed his life. The thing he lived to perpetuate had a value in his eyes: a value so high that he would spare no effort, expense or risk in securing it.

Just what was that value? When we have answered that we will have come near to answering another question: what is a naturist? Probably a man like Akeley never asks himself either question. He lives the answer. But sometimes it is implicit in language. Here are his own printed words: [2]

> It is my friend the elephant that I hope to perpetuate in the central group in the Roosevelt African Hall as it is now planned for the American Museum of Natural History—a hall with groups of African animal skins mounted on sculptured bodies, with backgrounds painted from the country itself. In this, which we hope will be an everlasting monument to the Africa that was, the Africa that is now fast disappearing, I hope to place the elephant group on a pedestal in the centre of the hall—the rightful place of the first animal of them all.

"The Africa that was, the Africa that is fast disappearing": that suggests better than definitions or descriptions the thing the naturist-artist longed to fix in forms of his art. There is an appeal, there, to all men of science. There is an appeal to all who care for a world adventurous and strange. And so we suddenly see arise out of the ranks of our scientists

[2] "In Brightest Africa," p. 54. C. Akeley, New York, 1923.

men who satisfy our human and romantic needs. Zoology could put up with a few skeletal remains, a few objects kept in formalin, and extensive records made on paper in the field. Comparative anatomy works amiably on such scant substantial evidence as a humerus, a lower mandible and a molar tooth—accepts more, but is happy with what it can get. It is not because the head taxidermist of the American Museum of Natural History was more of a realist that he wished to preserve the life of Africa, elephant-wise, *whole,* but because he was more of an idealist. He was a practical visionary, and efficient dreamer.

But besides his achieved work in animal sculptural groups, he gave us good pictures of a field-naturalist's Africa in his own unpretentious writing gathered in the pages of the book already quoted, "In Brightest Africa." We wish there were a dozen more such volumes; but into this one went his first-hand impressions of lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo, gorilla and "rhino." There is no list of equal interest from his viewpoint, hence we can feel that here is the cream of his contribution. In it he has made himself, first, reporter; then interpreter of a straight experience seen scientifically and told with simple candor.

The interpreter dominates, as he should; and often with a saving humor, the want of which has led to so many distortions in this field of literature.

To begin with, and before he has given detailed evidence, Akeley uses this humor to disabuse his

reader of a common prejudice. In the lion chapter he remarks, alluding to a prevailing notion that the beast is "savage,"

> The lion's savagery is very much the same as man's—that is, he kills other animals for food and, not having developed any specialized industries like the packers, each lion kills for himself. His day's work, instead of getting money to buy food with, consists chiefly in getting food. . . .

It is, too, a common-sense approach. The remainder of the chapter tells about how the food-getting is done, and incidentally how a lion behaves when he is interrupted at his occupation. Among so many conflicting reports and opinions this matter-of-fact approach makes his chapter decidedly convincing. It is entertaining, too. So are all the chapters.

It was after a big bull elephant from a herd he had been pursuing pinned him to the ground between its tusks (crushing three ribs and driving them into his lungs, causing other injuries that kept him invalided for three months), that he penned that statement about his friend the elephant. It was entirely sincere. He had the most genuine respect for the brute his profession required him to follow and now and then to kill. It was not a sentimental regard. This intrepid hunter was not soft. And yet we can understand him when we find him writing, "I like to think back to the day I saw the group of baby elephants playing with a great ball of baked dirt two and a half feet in diameter which, in their playing they rolled more than

half a mile, and the playfulness with which this same group teased the babies of a herd of buffalo until the cow buffaloes chased them off." He was on the watch for signs like these, and quick to appreciate all that was admirable in the traits of the big beasts; especially the traits which in man we call "being a good sport." He was so emphatically that himself.

No one who reads his book can possibly be inflamed by it with a desire to fare forth and kill game for the excitement of killing. Many who read it will find that their ardor for such sport has cooled, without abating their interest in the beasts hunted. All those incidents which check a man's destructive instinct are recorded, where another would slur them. Typical of Akeley is this remark: "There is no fun in shooting zebras and wild asses. It makes one uncomfortable." And after we have read in detail of one last named which when wounded dropped out of the herd and waited—"turned and faced us with great gentle eyes—without the least sign of fear or anger he seemed to wonder why we had harmed him," we understand. It cannot be pleasant sport shooting such animals, even for the needs of a museum. And again on Mount Mikeno, shooting gorillas was to him like murder. No need to dwell on the point, the reader may easily verify it from the appropriate chapter.

The charm of this whole narrative is in its simplicity and directness. There is never a pose of any sort, or a working up of effects, to create an impression. Our

field naturalist had for years put off writing the book. He would rather, he said, work at sculpturing. (He was already producing those pieces which have established his reputation as a creator in bronze.) But when he wrote he wrote effectively. Africa is in these pages. Sometimes he stops to give what in another would be called a "literary description"; but no digression. It is all in the picture: sound-life and motion. Thus at daybreak:

> The monkeys greeted one another with barks and coughs. Everything was waking up—it was a busy day. There was not a breath of air. I had gone back a million years; the birds were calling back and forth . . . a troop of chimpanzees in the open screamed, and their shouts were answered from another group inside the forest. All the forest life was awake and moving about as that huge herd of elephants, singly and in groups, flowed into the forest from the plain. There was one continuous roar of noise, all the wild life joining, but above it all were the crashing of trees and the squealing of the elephants as they moved into the forest on a front at least a mile wide. It was the biggest show I ever saw in Africa.

A pageant worth recording. We are glad he wrote as well as worked in bronze. We should have missed something irreplaceable.

In a peculiar sense these pages, written by a man who "did not hanker after writing a book," let us into the African experience as many a more finished writing cannot. We seem to get it directly, without a gloss or a distortion evidently because there was none in the mind of the author—no special twist or preoccupation. He was not even rehearsing future sculptural or ex-

hibition groups. He was taking things alertly as they came. Impressions were being registered which he could recall at will. How vividly he could recall them is plain from his group in bronze, of the charging elephants. He himself says that it records an actual encounter. What impresses us is less the actuality than the art of it. A modernist may smile at his avowal that this group "tells a story." He cannot smile at the forceful coördination of the charging forms into one irreducible movement. Akeley achieves what many a better known sculptor has not: unity of design in a group creation. His pieces are never two different sculptural designs added together.

An ingenuous man, a whole man, Carl Akeley is of our best—he is what we would like to have called *American.* Both in ingenuity and candor he is what we have imagined our manhood could be. It is our misfortune that our fiction-writers cannot imagine it. Wanting characters in any American novel, remotely approximating this real thing, we are obliged to find it where we can: in the life and artistic work of a farm-raised but city-bred New Yorker.

## ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS

DR. ANDREWS carries the American spirit of enterprise into ancient deserted worlds. It is nature, there, and he portrays it; but nature in the Gobi is not at all the one we know. It requires uncommon courage to invade it and uncommon good humor to meet the strains it puts upon one. Roy Chapman Andrews has more than met the test. Almost any chapter of his late book "On the Trail of Ancient Man" bears proof of it. No American has ever written into a record of strict scientific exploration so much exuberant interest, so much droll circumstance, so much informing narrative blended with robust adventuring and a spirit of all-pervasive good will. The book is not belles-lettres, it often verges on *bel esprit* of a jovial species—as when our grave and responsible scientist heads an important chapter "Bigger and Better Eggs." That was the slogan, he tells, of the first modern hunters and finders of the famous dinosaur eggs. It is typical. Neither brigands nor sandstorms daunted the members of the Central Asiatic Expeditions or long dampened their bonhomie and zest.

Dr. Andrews must serve as the type and exemplar of the reality-loving group who composed his staff.

Many of the nineteen Americans, experts and men of science, bore such titles as Palæontologist or Petrographer, Palæobotanist, and the like; but from his own account no more genial and fun-loving as well as ardent and scrupulous collectors could have been gathered from the ranks of technologists. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the group could be matched. These men (see the list of names following the dedication *To My Comrades in the Field* in the book referred to)[1] are representative of a growing number of men and women who devote trained minds to one common enthusiasm. Defined in terms of coordinated purpose it is this: to detach from their matrix and rearrange so as to form an intelligible picture those facts which time and chance have laid away. This picture, when completed, will be one of nature emancipated from time. The past, at least, will have become one vast enthralling panorama. The future will begin to emerge to such an extent that if we cannot forecast all its particularity we may find some hope and meaning in its trend.

The men who with camel's hair brush and paste-pot unlocked and preserved these age-old treasures are serious men; but just because they are serious and responsible and "scientific," we are relieved to find them human and natural—alive to the droll side of every situation when things take a humorous turn.

This last trait underlies the actions of their leader

1 "On the Trail of Ancient Man," New York and London, 1926.

when—as often happens—the band of explorers is in a tight place. Thundering with his voice and fist a challenge to the craven Mongolian soldiery who have held up his camel train at their *Yamen* he is, underneath, aware of the comedy of the spectacle and gives it, in his narrative, an air of opera bouffe. A band of brigands whom he charges single-handed with his automobile may be dangerous—would be under any other manoeuvering—but he makes of it a comic spectacle as the riders disperse helter-skelter under the shower of bullets he sends about their ears, while their frightened ponies keep them busy holding their seats.

The story is a singular blend of pure science and human interludes. It shows how nature may be studied without a long face and yet with results of value in the strictest of scientific terms. No small part of the value here presented lies in the contrast afforded by the expedition itself—its personnel and spirit—against a background of primitivism, ignorance and greed. One sees that this very spirit of dispassionate interest in natural facts is what redeems our modern explorative enterprise. It is science, it is also adventure; and there is no taint of the acquisitive about it, or of the political. We want these fossils and these facts, truly . . . but only that we may present them in the most illuminating possible way to the world. We take a pride in it: not because we are the first finders of this or that (although there is a boyish zest in that phase of it) but because it is of signal interest to all. Those

who cannot be alert to it must be among the retarded or the decadent.—Our public press, to be sure, perverts it, seeking always to make *sensation* out of what is human news. That is a malady of urban civilization—we must take it smiling if we can. If an infantile public demands, we shall even try to find "bigger and better eggs" of other and larger reptilians that lived ten million years ago. But there is a public not so infantile that follows and appreciates each move its exploring agents make. It is for that public, primarily that such researches are carried on and such records told; not for the entertainment or amusement of crowds.

This minority public for whose benefit such expeditions are made and their resulting treasures skilfully displayed is prepared for the profit it receives. It is familiar with the primary facts of geology, knows at what comparatively recent period man appeared on the earth and why his remains are not commingled with those of dinosaurs—comprehends the serial framework that Lyell and his successors have built out of stratigraphic records, and is able to fit new pictures into their proper places in that temporal frame. If it has not such a needed background it is disposed to acquire it and will read collaterally in order to supply the gaps. In other words, it is a studious group of persons and without it there could be no point to any such expeditions or such expert methods of collecting as Dr. Andrews represents. Back of him, too, is the figure of Henry Fairfield Osborn without whose vision

and encouragement this group of explorers might never have gone afield. Readers of the expedition annals are often, and always should, be readers of Osborn's "Men of the Old Stone Age." It is a case of "to him that hath shall be given." The more knowledge one brings to it, the more advantage one receives. A public which paid P. T. Barnum for his marvels and hoaxes would not have financed a single Asiatic expedition in search of permanent values in the nature world.

Undeniably we have the two distinct publics; but the only one that by any stretch of license can be said to have an interest in nature is the one that, with its intelligence, supports and follows men like Andrews and Granger in their painstaking and honest search for clues. Those who read Doyle's "Lost World" or gape at a corresponding moving picture would gape at a jack-in-the-box rigged by stage-mechanicians. Nature possesses dignity, disowns clap-trap, yet supplies adventure enough when adventure is not the object of the search.

* * * * *

A word on the personal attitude toward nature revealed in his writings by the subject of this sketch. In the chapter on collecting specimens of the takin or goat-antelope—that rare mountain-dweller with the "golden fleece"—and again in the account of his stalking of ibex and mountain sheep, we have excellent hunting-stories in which excitement is not scanted by

sentimental scruples about the killing of wild game. Of episodes in the hunt we get vivid pictures like this:

> There was a rush of brown bodies and eighteen ibex swept up the mountain. I waited, hoping that they would stop, but they charged over the summit like a troop of cavalry. I got in two more shots and saw a superb buck roll down the hill. Then the ravine was silent save for the whistling of a frightened cony. In ten minutes it was over, but in my life as a sportsman that day stands out above all the others.[2]

Andrews is an old hunter. From boyhood he has carried a gun. His pride in the sport, and his long experience of it, make what he says in this same chapter from which the quotation is taken ("Discovery of the Flaming Cliffs") all the more arresting. It is the ibex again, seen in death:

> I looked at him with little pride in what I had done. He was so splendid a creature, had weathered so many storms, fought so many battles among his kind, and had struggled so gamely at the last, that I would gladly have sent him on his way with the others of the herd, could I have given him back his life.
>
> Years of shooting have bred a change within me, and I care less and less to kill. I was a born sportsman. . . . In my years of wandering I have shot many kinds of game in many countries of the world. There have been times when I thought my cup was full of happiness as I gazed down at an animal that, by skill in stalking and straight shooting, I had taken as a trophy. But now that satisfaction comes less often. The last breathless moments of the stalk, the tense concentration of the first shot and the thrill of seeing an animal go down are too quickly over. My triumph leaves a vague unhappiness. I wish it could be undone. I would give back life to the

[2] *Ibid,* ch. IX.

creature against whom I have matched my skill—and won. Rather a thousand times carry away his portrait on a camera negative or a motion picture film! *That* is real sport. All the thrills of the stalk and the final shot are there; for the achievement is not only ten times more difficult but it leaves the beast his life.

This, coming from one who has known the fire and passion of it from the beginning is not a slump into a sentiment: it is a perception beyond the instinctive one, of the values in sport. It is one that comes, perhaps, only in maturity to some men. In any case it is a step forward, which a growing naturist will take just as soon as he realizes that destruction is no part of the appreciative scheme; when he sees that the thing he cares for is a living thing, not an accident to a mass of flesh.

Hunting aside, the narrative abounds in glimpses of a desert that, apart from its intrinsic interest as landscape and climate, reflects a glancing light on superantiquity. The sand-storms descend and cover the camps of modern men. So they descended to harry our earliest progenitors in times when a common stock (or so we believe) peopled this vastness and from it began to ray outward toward the forests and meadows of Europe and toward Mesopotamia's crescent belt of green.

In this fierce upland climate such fluctuations as the following are not uncommon. Such ordeals we may suppose our remote ancestors had to meet:

On the twenty-fourth of May . . . we fought our way through snow-drifts for three days although it was perfect mid-summer weather when we left Shabarakh Usu. The Flaming Cliffs whirled and danced in the heat waves reflected from the basin floor. A huge black raven drowsed upon a rock with beak half open and even the spotted lizards were too sleepily content to snap at the sand-flies which crawled incautiously beneath their pointed snouts. To think of snow was absurd. Yet a few hours later we were shaking with cold and battling an icy gale which whipped sand and gravel against our faces like bursting shrapnel.[3]

Again, a hundred-mile-an-hour gale would tear all the tents to tatters and even the coats from the sleepers' backs. It would be gone in an instant and the camp would be collecting its belongings from the countryside, cooking breakfast in whatever pots could be salvaged, and preparing for another day's work. Dawn and dusk would spread enchantment over a wild sand and rock desolation, till one forgot the claw of the wind and the teeth of the icy gale.

Would one wish comfort and convenience brought to this great park of nature where the secrets of man's early struggle through to competency are preserved? Here is the view our explorer takes of it; after seeing a caravan that must spend nine months moving across this waste:

The same trade in the same way over the same trails has gone on for untold centuries and will continue until that not far distant day when a railroad connects China with Central Asia. Then at one blow the romance and glamour of the desert will be destroyed. Tourists will sit in heated cars, eating

[3] *Ibid,* Chapter XV.

the food of Europe, reading week-old newspapers, and comprehending not at all the glorious history of the Gobi trails.

The last sentence betrays that flair for the spirit of the untamed, the unspoiled in nature, which every seer or prophet or explorer must have deep in him if he would minister to the spirit of man.

## EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

IT is not possible for an average citizen, inexpert in ornithology and unable to devote much time to bird-lore, intelligently to practice conservation—efficiently to protect what the heedless destroy or allow to perish with a changing environment. To refrain from shooting this or that game bird is hardly enough. One needs to know what wild life is threatened and why. Some of it is not game, is shot wantonly by persons who either cannot distinguish or do not care. There must be explicit information, easily obtainable, in this exact field. Those who can supply it may not be catering to a popular demand or adding to the sum of the world's best literature; but they are performing a service quite indispensable in any community where one or more species of wild fowl are already extinct and others are making their last stand.

Edward Howe Forbush has worked in this field with distinction and success. He is the founder of the Audubon Society of Massachusetts, and has been State Ornithologist since 1908. He is described as a writer on economic ornithology. Few of us perhaps would seek out a book on that theme. Here are reasons why more would be attracted to such a volume if they knew what was there.

The rather heavy volume I choose for illustration rests, normally, among the 598.2's in the Science department of your public library. It was issued by the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture "By Authority of the Legislature." It has a somewhat formidable look. The numerous illustrations are reassuring, but what heartens one is a look at the Table of Contents.

Part I gives you, individually paged, a list of the birds "now hunted for food or sport in Massachusetts and adjacent States." It promises to tell their histories. That, precisely, is what you want: not all at once, but arranged so that you can get at them singly, when you want them—when you wish to know what is happening to any particular bird of this class.

You will not want an esthetic and imaginative picture and you will not find it. Dependable information is what you will get; and first of all, an accurate description of the species, so that there may be no mistake what the information is about.

You have read that there is in New England a rare and interesting game bird which corresponds to the western "Prairie Chicken"; and that it is likely to be exterminated because of the ravages of cats which were once tame but have been allowed to run wild in the woods. Under "Grouse" you will find its description and an admirable plate of the birds—a group of them—drawn from a photograph: the Pinnated Grouse. You will find its history from the first loose

jottings of Wood and Morton in the 1630's to the present time. You will discover one outstanding fact: that its destruction as species was needless, since the Heath Hen (as it is otherwise called) is not a forest bird "and the clearing away of the forests favored its increase." The activities of the settlers actually added to its feeding-ground and increased the supply of its food. Only the wantonness which so often characterizes an unthinking population, and the heedlessness that goes with it, could have seen this fine species reduced almost to the vanishing point (alive only in game refuges) and exterminated in the larger part of its original range.

You will find that in colonial times the species was abundant, but that it was "pursued, trapped and shot at all seasons; the young were destroyed by dogs and cats"; and that when at last laws were passed limiting the shooting they were not enforced, or could be waived by a local town vote. The only effective mode which a presumably enlightened society could find to prevent the absolute extinction of the bird was buy and protect at private cost a Heath Hen reservation on land favorable to its survival. This was done in 1907. And this in spite of the fact that the grouse was perfectly adapted to the region where it has been exterminated, and needed only ordinary consideration and protection from irresponsibles to keep it in the status of a self-surviving bird.

The question of the survival of a species or its ex-

termination under modern American conditions is a curious one. It must be primarily social. Not what happens to a particular species of grouse but what happens to us, is the real issue. It is not so much a question of keeping a certain creature alive in the fields or woods, as it is of keeping a certain creative and responsive feeling alive in us. Mr. Forbush puts the matter in the following terms:

> The Heath Hen belongs to this country. It has been fitted by the natural selection of centuries to maintain itself abundantly in southern New England. It is superior in every way to any foreign game bird that we are likely to introduce. As the forests are cut off and the land thus unfitted for the Ruffed Grouse it becomes better fitted for the Heath Hen.

That seems both succinct and sufficient. That so engaging a native species should be perpetuated seems only a part of the fitness of things which we should never question if we gave it a thought. But who does give it one? There is the difficulty. Almost no one either in or out of the precincts affected does give the matter an effective thought. Perhaps, if we did, we might find our various literary, social, political or other interests less compelling for the moment, or until we had registered our interest in the vanishing species in some manner where it might count.

Without doubt our human interest in the perpetuation of any natural wild species begins in some more or less instinctive and emotional impulse of youth. It is uncalculated and unreasoning—it does not align

itself with so austere a subject as "Conservation," it may even be against it (if we are "born hunters")—and it becomes poetic, scientific or economic as we grow older, according to our bent.

There is no necessary schism or hostility between the three diverse forms. A persuasive and popular poem about the Heath Hen might do as much to enlist protection as a scientific paper; but it would be strange and unfitting if the poet refuse to contribute to, or in any way coöperate with, an effort to conserve the tangible life of the bird.

Pure literature is, in its way, comparable to pure science. It does not concern itself with the practical means of extending the values it promotes. Perhaps those who write and those who read by preference pure literature, need to be reminded now and then that we live in a heedless and slovenly world, out of which many fine things are constantly being crowded by others not so fine; that our eyes, as we range through woods or by ponds and over pastures are being defrauded of sights they might have enjoyed; that a stoical acceptance of our losses may not be quite the best attitude to assume in our Western world.

It is a good thing to be able to evoke by language the responses that a literary artist wins—to call into being, by word-magic, the charm and motion of a grouse or a wild duck. It is equally a good thing to provide in dependable pages full knowledge of how the grouse or duck subsists; what it feeds on, and what

will induce it to settle in a given territory, what enable it to stay.

It is interesting to see how (shifting the theme now from grouse to duck) Mr. Forbush treats this matter of the food of wild birds. Those who have admired our fine anserine species at a distance, or in parks and museums but never thought of them as beings with urgent dietary needs will feel a surprised pleasure in his account of the food of our American wild ducks. Not is only the fact of the importance of wild rice stated, but the manner of its germination, and the ways of obtaining viable seed; the kind of soil it roots in, the kind and degree of current that will permit the plant to live; how and where the ducks find it, and what per cent it forms of their food. Wild celery is described and pictured similarly. You see the plant, its seed-pods, its winter buds, looking like small and slender-horned bulbs. The thought occurs to you that one need not be content to see teal and mallard go by, but may induce them to detrain on the margins of one's pond—by providing it with their favorite foods, as many are doing. One even finds advertised in the outing journals seed and plants of this nature, for use in stocking small lakes and streams.—These practical details are treated in Part III of our selected book. Part II can only be sadly considered, and as a warning. It memorializes those species which are already extirpated and cannot be conserved. It pricks our American conscience to read the list. We would not like to see it extended. We sud-

denly realize that besides poetry and descriptive literature about them we would have liked a sight of the bodies and motions of some of these superb vanished birds—like the passenger pigeon, which once darkened the sky. It now darkens our mood to think what was done to it. And how can we be otherwise than wistful for the glorious bronze-sheened turkey that flew wild in all Appalachian woods!

## WILLIAM LEON DAWSON

IT is not long, as time is measured, between the completion of "Birds of America," by John James Audubon, and the "Birds of California," by William Leon Dawson. The projects may be compared. To be exact, it is eighty-five years. In that small span changes have occurred which profoundly affect the character of such achievements, among them the change involving coöperation. The later work could not be the single accomplishment of one man. No man exists on the planet who could combine in himself all the gifts required for the production of this particular work of art linked with science; yet it is in another sense the work of one man. It is his vision of an idealized science —a glorified tribute to birds. That the vision was realized about a California "horizon" is an accident. That State has no monopoly on the beauty which is captured here. It is a winged beauty, often bred in the far north, wintered in the regions farther south, a migrant glory on which no one State has an exclusive claim.

Allan Brooks, the artist, is himself from the Canadian Northwest. His creations belong to all naturists, to the world of appreciation, and cannot possibly be thought

of as decorative values pertaining to a local book. This is necessarily true because, as Dawson wrote of him, he is "without a peer in the delineation of birds." Here, then, is a book that belongs to the States, primarily, but ultimately to the naturist's world.

It was inevitable that in an enterprise of this character photography should contribute its quota. There has been equal virtuosity elsewhere, with the camera, but nowhere has the photograph been better subordinated to art.

All the rigid requirements of the taxonomist have been complied with. Species and subspecies, to the last obscure race of song-sparrows, are faithfully displayed. Measurements, distribution, coloration and every other descriptive requirement is met, but the essential purpose of the book has not been overlaid. It emerges quite triumphant, because the spirit and the purpose have been conscious and clear from the first. They are distinctly stated in the preface.

> It is the province of this work to *appreciate* and, so far as possible, to express, not alone the conceptual entities of science called species, but the very persons and lives of those hundreds of millions of our fellow travelers and sojourners, called *birds,* the birds of California.

This was said without hesitation to a public who could be regarded as friendly, could even be thought of as in partnership with the effort since they had subscribed to it before the preface was written. It took more courage to say it before the American Orni-

thologists' Union, a body of experts many of whom would not care to admit that "appreciation" lay within their province. Indeed so sensible did Mr. Dawson feel of a difference between their view and his own that in addressing them he made himself spokesman for a large class of persons on whose activities an A. O. U. member might quite conceivably look with contempt. He must claim kinship, he said, with that class known as popular ornithologists, "a class which includes besides many sober plodders, many more who are quite unscientific folk, enthusiasts, poets, artists, dreamers." So far as expert knowledge and mental equipment are concerned, those who knew him know that there was no need to ally himself with unscientific folk. What he did he did deliberately, believing that this class needs a champion. His reasons were these:

(I quote from the address)

> Acquaintance with the birds assures *Enjoyment of Life.*
>
> A knowledge of these things (their activities, their behavior, etc.) leads us to share with the birds their own *Joy in Life*—that is the very significance of the bird. Here Nature, blind, struggling, insensate, sometimes appalling, has achieved delicate expression, has found a voice. . . . The bird sings because it must . . . bird song sets the pace for the finest in human music and teases the imagination beyond our fondest utterance. It is forthright, compelling, authoritative. To be ignorant of its appeal is to be ignorant of the life of poetry.
>
> But surely not all the joy of a bird's life may be apprehended by inquiry into the arrangement of its plumage, its structure, its associations, its choice of food or the color of its eggs. . . . How then may it be apprehended? By sympathy. . . . To understand a thing we must make a common lot with it.

It took courage to say this to an A. O. U. Congress, for understanding of this sort has little to do with science. However, it has much to do with scientists. Want of it may and often does mar them. Failure to keep alive precisely this sympathetic kind of contact exacts a price which no human being ought to be willing to pay.

Not every scientist may have the gift of expression. That's another matter. To put into words or to convey in color what he perceives of the more vital realities may easily be far beyond him; but to maintain some sense of those living values is not beyond him . . . if he stays human.

And if he does not?

The problem is a far larger one than Leon Dawson could have realized when he was putting his notes together while traveling by rail to Philadelphia. A great rift had appeared in humanity. It was this rift that he was trying to bridge or heal. It was not the simple question, "Shall I be an ornithologist or a bird-lover?" that presented itself. Any man might answer that according to temperament. The deeper issue was, shall we be part men or whole men? A whole man "makes common lot," in some sense, with everything alive; surveys himself, his joys, his accomplishments, in the light of other beings that breathe. That is what it means to be a naturist.

Dawson of the bird books was such a one. He had it as a vocation, although this kind of wholeness had

no name. Bailey's word which we have had to press into service was not in use. Its scope had not been defined. He was obliged to describe himself as of kin to what are known as popular ornithologists. If there was a touch of disparagement in the title, he was willing to share it. But in the light of a dozen other lives moved by a like impulse we can see that what he studied was the nature life expressed in "the very persons and lives" of the birds. Ornithology was only a superficial side, a means of accuracy and intercommunication between students; or should have been such means. But when forced to focus too long on its technical aspects he felt himself cut off from the responsive life of the world.

So much for the spirit of his work. We have now to see how it expressed itself in his principal achievement, the four volume "Birds of California," to which "The Birds of Ohio" and "The Birds of Washington" served as understudies.

It is a monumental piece of work, made possible by the generosity of Ellen B. Scripps and the good will of Cooper Club members, Audubonists, sponsors like Dr. Joseph Grinnell, H. S. Swarth and others; made necessary by the author's vision of what such a creation should be. It should be much more than a book. It should be a great presentation, in color-plate, photogravure and duotone of the birds and their backgrounds; done in exuberance but not in excess. It should be a work of art.

It should contain the handiwork of a great painter of birds. The water-colors by Allan Brooks should be a feature; they were and are a distinctive value, thoroughly harmonized in spirit and in setting. It is eminently satisfying as a clean-bound and right-printed book.

Those who are fortunate enough to own the four volumes, twelve years in the making, which completed Dawson's great work know that the vision here described was fulfilled.

"This man has expensive ideas," a Cooper Club member said to me in an undertone when the ornithologist was outlining his plans. It was true; but the maker of "Birds of California" also had right ideas of what constitutes value in such a book. It is safe to say that a subscriber to the Book Lover's Edition received, after his long waiting, three times the strict market value of his subscription, while the aesthetic worth to him is incalculable. He possesses, between these wholly satisfying embossed and sea-gull-flown covers an inexhaustible store of bird-wealth, to which he will return again and again. Never reading very far consecutively, he will capture the fact he craves, or the imaginative picture, and feel himself as fortunate, in respect to these special backgrounds, as if he owned the magic carpet or Aladdin's lamp. For how else should a city dweller visit the snowy feeding grounds of Dawson's Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis dawsoni*) in the Grand Cirque of the High Sierras without such aid?

How should he do this between duties, when pressure and strain are destroying him, or even in his scant vacations when family preferences confine him to conventional escapes? But let him turn to the Leucosticte chapter in the first volume of Dawson, and, besides the lavish photographs and engaging text he will find an Allan Brooks plate of the bird. It is one of many color plates, all admirable as art; but this one brings conviction that something exquisite exists in nature, far removed from human responsibility and care; something which it is wholly delightful and healing to contemplate. And that is the sort of experience for which the book provides a background and an occasion; with cues so various that one is not likely to tire as he recurs to them at need.

In so describing it we are treating the book as a design, a setting for happy experiences. We feel that it should be so treated: as a harmonious whole. It so functions. No part jars upon or interferes with another. And there is about it no trace of the "arty" or effeminate; no sign of the hyper-aesthetic, nor even of the "highbrow." The author's personality explains that. Highly individual in outlook, he strode his broad beat to a purpose. He mounted no pedestal, wore no scholastic disguises. Perhaps a certain quaintness in his writing comes from the blend of early theological training with native whimsical mind-twist. The phrasing is original, lively, verging sometimes on the "popular" but never surrendering its pungency, never cheapened.

Where it offends a devotee of English style after the manner of Walter Pater it does so from a quality of ingenuousness rather than from careless diction.

But the text need not be considered primarily as belles-lettres. It is the carrier for a wealth of personal observation of susceptive life in the open. Dawson is here, to the life, as we knew him: [1] his tall spare form is in the picture, a keen and tireless guide, a master of bird lore. Why should his words be impersonal? It would never have occurred to him to make them so?

Sometimes he personalizes his birds. It does not occur to us to challenge him. Beguiled by his approach we have insensibly forgotten to think of nature in terms of abstraction. His mood prevails. Let it. He seems to be describing individual birds, not species. Good. Did he not set out to?

Beside the usual preoccupations of a bird-lover Dawson had a strong penchant for scientific oölogy. He believed in it. We suspect that back of his sober belief in the worth and possibilities of birds' eggs as material for scientific research, there was a perfectly natural love, a naturist's love, for these charming spheroids as subjects. Consider the photograph of patterns on the eggs of a lark sparrow on page 241; or the enlarged end view of a single specimen on the page preceding. If in those elaborate and intriguing scrolls there is no meaning, then there ought to be. A good pragmatist

[1] William Leon Dawson died in April, 1928, from an attack of pneumonia, while in Cleveland, while projecting a new edition of "The Birds of Ohio."

would make it his business to find one. Or consider the ravishing color-plate of eggs in Dawson's "Journal of the Museum of Comparative Oölogy" for 1920 (Volume, I, No. 3). All the joy of boyhood is wrapped up in it. Those pale blues of the California and Santa Cruz jays, with their mottlings; that pale cinnamon of the Cactus wren, the shading, the gradations: quite an unfathomable source of satisfaction, to which too close an analysis might do sacrilege. Nevertheless the Editor of the Journal strove to organize a permanent fellowship that (in his own words) "a real science may be evolved." He felt that interest in birds' eggs could become "at least a major avocation, a thing for grown men and women to take seriously." He did, as a matter of fact, edit "a dignified, scholarly and comprehensive journal," as he had aspired to do; no mere medium for collectors. It was a pioneer of its sort, and something to date from, in any future endeavors.

But how very far Leon Dawson was from being a devotee of any aspect of pure science may be known from a personal creed which Frances E. Dawson, his wife and true companion allows us to quote here. He called it

*An Ornithologist's Confession*

I believe in love and life and beauty.

I love God and the truth and my fellow men, and the birds.

After that I love mountains, and clouds, and flowers and shadows on the water, and pictures, and jugs (and tea-cups), and birds' eggs, and the crash of the surf, and the sighing of the wind in the pine trees, and the voices of children (babies preferred), and green things (the same as God does).

I love books—at least a good many of them. They belong to the categories preceding, for they multiply our enjoyment of everything sevenfold. I love, in spite of much cheap talk, a *well-bound* book. Why should I submit to see Milton rigged out in fustian or Keats in jeans?

I love creative activity, the realizing of dreams, the focusing and recording of ideals, the causing of worthy things to happen.

I love the burden of the common lot, the buffet and sting of adversity, the falling down and getting up again, the clenched teeth, the still tongue—the smile over a heart which, therefore, does not break. I love the board swept clean, and the expectation—never a certainty—that a Hand will spread it again.

I love—Oh, I love Life, *Life,* LIFE—Life as it is, Life as it may be, Life as it SHALL be.

Best of all, I love to share these things with my friends.

Santa Barbara, Jan. 1, 1915

It was eight years after this that his plans for a "well-bound book," sickeningly interfered with by a world war, finally materialized in the hands of the South Moulton Company as a consummately well-bound, well-printed, edited and illustrated book of birds: birds which, as we have said, belong aesthetically to no State or province, but are a migrant beauty which the author caught as he could, on the wing. His great work is a monument to all birds, everywhere, and to that peculiar habit of mind which finds in them a continuous satisfaction, renewal and release. It was not, for him, an idle pastime. It was, one sees, a vocation, a creed. All his work bears the distinctive stamp of an ardent, original, serious and yet whimiscal apostle of the beauty which is birds.

## FRANK M. CHAPMAN

WHEN, in 1895, a "Handbook of the Birds of Eastern North America" appeared in neat durable cloth covers and we opened it—we novices newly fired with a zeal to know American birds—we felt a conviction (by no means weakened by subsequent experience) that here was the first good, dependable modern guide to native birds. A guide for amateurs: a light, manageable, but by no means inadequate handbook for identification and acquaintance. It was not loose, rambling, incoherent. It had the minimum of absolute technical descriptive data compactly set down where you wanted it: under the name of each bird. After that it had the more discursive notes which led the mind out into inquiry about the living bird—its manœuvres, songs, habits and appeal to interest—led there and left it there, for the novice to work out.

It was a great book, if greatness can consist in meeting an urgent need. That was the time when many minds were breaking into a sudden awareness that the woods had charm, and that its most active embodiments were not wood nymphs but birds. At that time we did not want so much to read about them, we

wanted to encounter them for ourselves. But to do this we had to know them: not as a boy knows his chum, uncritically, but discriminatingly, with a precise knowledge of details. In other words, we had to know our species of thrush or warbler scientifically—nape, crown, quills, coverts, wing-bars, tarsus and tail; by order and also by family and genus. Otherwise we should jumble them all; two distinct bird-kinds would seem to us to be one kind. We should be confusing grosbeaks with grackles, mistaking dab-chicks for ducks, warblers for finches, vireos for wrens, and variously muddling our minds. We felt, when we found in the *Handbook* a list of the great bird Orders done in Latin and properly described and defined, that here was sound wisdom. It gave us a foundation for our future undertakings; and so we began to learn with gusto those long Latin names: *Pygopodes, Longipennes, Anseres* and the rest. Some of us could recite the list today. Chapman's bird-book activated us toward accuracy without destroying our zest for the real thing. It was that kind of a book.

Mr. Chapman was then, and is now, a consistent ornithologist. That need not mean that he was or is a nature-interpreter or an essayist. Eminent men in his profession have been content to write technical books; "contributions to science," they are called. A list of the Frank M. Chapman books betrays an interest in the people who study science, a flair for communication, with which experts are not always endowed. Aids, these books are, to amateurs, in the main; but

freighted with important first-hand observation as well; containing also fresh material and methods in pure science, where he has worked in the Andean field.

Expert and authority, then, of international note, Mr. Chapman has chosen for himself a special rôle. As Curator (since 1908) of Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History he has made his department a means of communication with those who need the information it commands: with beginners in bird-study, with professional ornithologists, with artists, authors, explorers—with any and all legitimate seekers of knowledge concerning birds. His view of a chemically pure science unrelated to human interest is expressed in his own words:

> That science which is sufficient unto itself has no excuse for its existence. If our studies of birds have no bearing on the progress and welfare of mankind they are futile. That they have such a bearing, and in an exceptional degree, we know. . . .

and still more succinctly in this saying taken from a Department paper:

> Live men are worth more than dead birds.

His science of birds remained science. It was not watered for popularization. As science and equally as reality, he made it appeal. That has been his special service through a long and active career. Those who have leaned on his guidance have not taken the lazy ways of bird study; have not been content with vague sentimental notions about birds.

Here is a curious fact, worth the notice of those who wish to weigh such books as literature. Frank Chapman has not elected to work in belles-lettres. He gives a plain account of the facts, without pretense of embellishment in literary modes. And yet the effect is often very like what one gets from skilled descriptive writing. I am thinking now of certain passages in "Camps and Cruises of an Ornithologist." Best quote from the book itself, at random. The page opened gives an outlook from his post on a miniature islet in a Florida cypress swamp.

My blind was quickly erected on the islet, from which I could observe the Water Turkeys (anhingas) on a neighboring islet, and soon the nearly grown Ward's herons, in a nest just above my head, were chanting their food-call; the Water-Turkeys, with rattling rasping notes, came back to their nests; Barred Owls called from the gloom of the cypresses and out in the pines Sandhill Cranes were trumpeting. From the forest of "bonnet" leaves and roots, bull-frogs grunted and alligators whined. . . . There were moccasins. One crawled out to sun himself on the islet which was barely large enough for me. . . .

About one hundred pairs of Water Turkeys were breeding on the islets in this secluded place; their remarkably well-made nests being in the bushes and trees from three or four, to fifteen or twenty feet above the water. . . .

The young raise their long, slender, tremulous necks and utter incessantly a twittering peep; while the expanded hyoids so increase its size that the head appears to be placed on the neck upside down. They secure their food as do young Pelicans, Cormorants, and all other members of the order *Steganopodes* with whose habits I am familiar, by thrusting the head down the parent's throat. . . .

Although they soar with exceptional ease, Water Turkeys alight very clumsily, virtually tumbling on to their perches

with much flapping of wings and loss of balance before coming to rest. When not alarmed, they seem to take flight with much hesitation, opening and closing their wings, in preparation, several times before they trust themselves to their support.

No merely "literary" description, unfortified by scientific insight, could convey the reality of this swamp and its denizens so well. Incidentally one perceives in it the kind and quality of observation which is worth making; which not merely has a casual interest but lifts the mind over and on into a world of speculative investigation where it may carry one for itself. Such a passage furnishes clues worth following. *Why* should an anhinga be clumsy at alighting, hesitant on leaving its perch? Despite its adequate wing-surface is it nearer than our familiar passerine birds to ancestors wearing scales? It looks it; "Snake Bird," of the long tenuous neck and quick darting head.

Aside from that, such a book, engagingly written, opens a world which the majority of us could not penetrate. We have not the time, skill, resources. But for our nature men, these swamps and hammocks might be in Mars or the moon. Further, the detailed photographs and descriptive episodes of a study of flamingoes on the Bahamas do not need to be produced twice. Not until an observer approached them from a different angle would these intimate studies of bird behavior and motion need to be repeated. The chapter on this most strange and splendid of water-waders is

perhaps the most striking one in "Camps and Cruises." However, to illustrate the value of a large and special knowledge we might cite the considerable group of "Bird Studies in California," incorporated in the same book. No Californian, not an expert in such matters, could give so lucid an account of the State as a whole. Few of the old residents know even the physiographic facts, or could correlate them with the bird-life in so large yet accurate a way. And as for specific knowledge, it is amazing how little an old timer knows of all but the most obvious forms of wild life—those which furnish him food and sport or threaten his flocks, farms, orchard fruits and trees. Only a man whose business it is to know them can know them; and he quickly adjusts his experience gained in another climate, a far distant State. He is equipped to see, and to set down without distortion the things seen. His science is a part of his seeing, and it is indispensable to sound statements of even the most familiar forms of truth—by which one means here, facts *in their setting;* not jumbled or transposed.

But besides the facts in their setting, one finds that Mr. Chapman is susceptible to a certain living quality in the facts; something which concerns a nature interpreter rather than a systematist. His feeling for this quality can best be conveyed in his own words, where he describes his experience in that favorite device of his, the observer's "blind."

Within the shelter of this "cloak of invisibility" I have passed the most enjoyable and, I hope, profitable hours of my life as a field naturalist. There is a supreme and wholesome pleasure in feeling that one had reached a point from which the drama of animal life may be studied without the performers knowing that they are under observation. Wholly aside from the often thrilling novelty of the experience and the thought that even if unconsciously one has been accepted as a part of the surroundings, there is a well-founded satisfaction in realizing that one is making an actual contribution to our knowledge of animal life, not based on the study of creatures in captivity, or those placed under greater or less restraint by fear, but of animals in their native haunts, living their lives under absolutely natural conditions.

When in 1928 the Roosevelt Medal for Distinguished Service was awarded to Dr. Chapman, Hermann Hagedorn, giving the citation, said of him in singularly felicitous language,

For the medal of distinguished service in the promotion of the study of natural history I have the honor to present a name which is beloved wherever in America, in school or home, the birds are permitted to come down from the treetops to be the companions of men: a writer and a lecturer of persuasive charm, who has taught a nation to see, to know, to love and to protect the entrancing and forever mysterious familiars of its daily life; a creative innovator in methods of exhibition and of ornithological research; a scientist, wise and unsatisfied, whose laboratory is a wilderness of Andean peaks, where fluttering wings betray to him things secret since the beginning of time.

That is a poet's tribute, and it is furthermore a deserved one. In it is buried a hint that although our great naturists are few in number, there exist others, men of mark in the world of letters, who can on occa-

sion convey the very essence of that for which a nature man's life is spent; can express in subtlest shading our intangible yet truly human relationship to the animate life of the world.

The subtle shading here is Mr. Hagedorn's; yet in unsubtle language, and in a manner to appeal to plain people everywhere, Dr. Chapman has humanized those quite real relationships which exist between persons and birds. In a more recent book than his classic manual for identification, in the volume called "Bird Life," he has prepared a wider approach, leading the beginner into an understanding of what the bird is as an adaptive organism, and making the reader familiar with the more important families and orders of common birds. Although the greater part of the detail is not applicable to our West Coast (so far as that detail consists of descriptive data it makes use of Eastern species), I find this card tucked into a copy now in circulation in the Los Angeles Public Library:

IMPORTANT

This book is in great demand.

Please read and return it promptly, as other readers are waiting for it.

With a quotation from "Bird Life" we may end this brief sketch of America's most widely read ornithologist:

Birds will appeal most strikingly to us through their songs. When your ears are attuned to the music of birds your world

will be transformed. Bird's songs are the most eloquent of Nature's voices. . . . As time passes you will find that the songs of birds bring a constantly increasing pleasure. This is the result of association. The places and people that make our world are constantly changing: the present slips from us with growing rapidity, but the birds are ever with us. . . . Boyhood's friends are boys no longer, and worst of all, there has appeared another generation of boys whose presence is discouraging proof that for us youth has past. Then some May morning we hear the Wood Thrush sing. Has he, too, changed? Not one note, and as his silvery voice rings through the woods we are young again. No fountain of youth could be more potent. A hundred incidents of long ago become as real as those of yesterday. And here we have the secret of youth in age which every venerable naturalist I have ever met has convincingly illustrated. I could name nearly a dozen, living and dead, whom it has been my valued privilege to know. . . . These veterans were old in years only. Their hearts were young. The earth was fair; plants still bloomed, and the birds sang for them. There was no idle waiting here; the days were all too short. With what boyish ardor they told of some recent discovery; what inspiration there was in their enthusiasm!

Then the great naturalists that Chapman has known were naturists too, as we describe them. Such are the marks.

# WALTER PRICHARD EATON

"Walter Prichard Eaton, author. . . . *American Stage of Today.* . . . *Plays and Players.* . . . *The Actor's Heritage,* etc. . . . Lecturer on dramatic topics." (From *Who's Who in America*)

THIS very partial selection from our leading guide to Persons, represents the prevailing metropolitan view of Mr. Eaton. It is the aspect under which he would have to function if introduced as speaker at the Friday Morning Club.

The petite blonde librarian at one of our best juvenile libraries takes a different view of it, as she leads you to a shelf packed with books having such titles as these: "The Boy Scouts of Berkshire," "Boy Scouts in the Dismal Swamp," "Boy Scouts in Glacier Park," "Boy Scouts on Katahdin"—all the copies showing much wear and all in duplicate. "Mr. Eaton," you remark, "is a well-known dramatic critic. "Is he indeed?" she replies. "I didn't know it." And she adds that the boys all like his books, anyway.

The titles of the boys' books lead you to suspect (and a glance inside their covers confirms it) that these volumes are not, in an adult sense, "literature." One is not even certain, as he casually turns the leaves, that these books are guides and interpreters in a world we have exalted as "nature." They don't set up to be.

They show an uncanny prescience of what a boy scout would feel if he were being seduced into a febrile performance labeled "appreciation of nature." He runs no such risk in an Eaton book. True, the book admits that "the Sourdnahunk murmured a sleepy song as it ran clear and brown over the gravelly bottom," and that "the air was sweet with the smell of spruce and balsam." It even mentions a soft wind which just whispered in the branches overhead. But in response to these quite credible forest wiles we get a robust response:

> "This is the life!" Bennie exclaimed, rolling over on his back and gazing up to the lazy white clouds. "A good old loaf in the woods! Wish a bear or something would come out, so's I could just lie here and watch him."

—which rather well epitomizes what a normal boy of twelve to sixteen is and ought to be in respect to woodland atmospheres. He is no aesthete, but a sturdy epicurean. And for the most part he remains so, through to age sixty, merely adding finesse to his sensuous perceptions . . . if he is lucky enough to keep them intact and not find them all frayed into dry recollections. Ten to one the song of the brook and the scent of spruce and balsam will have become a wistful half-believed memory, in middle age and thereafter, unless the boy has formed a firm habit of renewing such contacts. These books go as far as such widely readable books can towards forming the habit. If in later life there is a reflective turn in some of the boys'

minds, this will be flowered out by its inherent force and our present author need have no concern about it. He knows that and acts accordingly. He caters here to a healthy taste for an out-of-doors with bears in it, and the sight of a moose drinking, to a taste for hard hikes and hilarities intermixed; droll tales, scrapes, cautions, risks, bough beds and early risings. He never lards his tale with meretricious or misleading adventures. His readers are never dragged down to a Tarzan level. When, as in "Edge of the Wilderness," Mr. Eaton attempts animal tales, he cannot be accused of nature faking. His beasts are not endowed with highly sensitized esoteric souls compared with which man's is a grovelling psyche. Swiftfoot, the wolf, is an instinctive hunting brute with no more powers of mind than his actual experience can condition. Some might stumble at the sense of humor which Bill the Moose has evolved; but how do they know it is not authentic? In any case "The Odyssey of Old Bill" is a wholesome and effective picture of wild life brought into contact with civilization. It is not a fabrication and a romantic fantasy. As it gathers momentum it only lifts into a bigger feeling which might be called poetic force, but not emotional inflation.

These tales, which are really descriptive sketches with a "life-story" character, may have been written for boys, but adults may profit by them. They are informing. They are restrained in language, and have adequate backgrounds. Together with the purely

juvenile books they make a contribution to popular outdoor literature which promotes health interest and sane attitudes. On this ground their author deserves recognition. But he has not stopped at their level.

If Mr. Eaton had written only one of the sketches printed now under the title "Green Trails and Upland Pastures" he would have defined himself as a mature interpreter. Although some of them have appeared in "our best magazines," they are literature. It is to be feared they are also classifiable as essays. The same quality in their author that prevented him from offending adolescent scouts has saved his face with magazine readers. There is no pretense of stylistic elevation. That fine lines are being etched might escape the ordinary reader. The zest would carry him.

This zest is very genuine. It is not a deskman's infatuated joy in escape from work—not even his delight in words, merely. He can use them, it seems, and that must be a pleasure; but beyond that he has escaped back into a reality. Not that he is delirious with the smell of the woods or the "dome-like billow" of green where the pasture goes over the shoulder of the hill, but that he is at home there. He does not write as an outsider. All his pictures are vividly seen, but none of them are "compositions" grouped for literary effect. We have no decadent art here, no hypersensitive rot—the man talks a language we know, if we know an elemental urge which the earth wakens.

That urge is primitive, its expression infinite and

variable. And this is why some of it will always remain unsaid and new forms may be found for the saying. Walter Prichard Eaton as pure nature-writer in the realm of expression may not have beaten out a new formal vehicle—the essay form carries—he has found fresh themes, fresh sincerities.

It is true that some of the papers, like that on Lake Chelan (the fifth in "Green Trails and Upland Pastures") bear the stamp of "articles" and would not be out of place in a magazine of travel. Such robust writings have passed the test of a contemporary survival where many more tenuous compositions have died in desks and seen neither print nor appreciation. It was precisely because Mr. Eaton's work has been accepted and proved itself acceptable in his time yet contains much that deserves to be remembered, that we selected it for this notice. The evocations in "Cohorts of the Frost" are better than they need to be for a magazine article, flecked with imagery more real than fancied—mined out of memory, flown into words with all the courage of an enthusiasm unchilled by fear of "fine writing." That cold sophisticated air which chills so many pages today and is the coward's sign under a mask of superiority has not dragged him down. It is not the mature man, or not that man alone, who is out for a frost frolic. The boy is a participant—the boy he was and is, under urban discipline. That is the charm of this particular paper. Every man among us knows that no fancies he can ever phrase in a "literary" way will

ever equal the power of the original picture in which he himself figures, at the first snow-fall: himself gazing upward, with eyes that "would unconsciously pick out a particularly large flake as it separated from the blur of descending thousands"—himself part and parcel of that lyric demonstration. This runs all through these pages, to an inevitable and only possible climax——

> No work can be done this morning! Down from the attic come the snowshoes, the thongs are tested, moccasins oiled, and we are off for the deep woods.

—a climax in action. Thus one launches one's self into a nature that one loves and that one knows he can never express fully in verbal symbols. We feel this tendency in all outdoor books by Walter Prichard Eaton and precisely because we do, have chosen to recognize him as a good guide; one who will not leave you at your desk, mooning, but will drive you out where limbs and lungs renew their function. For we can never tell—made as we are made, our minds hung in a maze of cell-life and those cells the pensioners of haemoglobin —how much of our glow and fire of life is thought and how much of it is action. Even the senses lean on that active pulsing geyser-flow that renews us. Never in a bookman's withdrawn and protected air will you get that smell of the forest which is hinted in "The Skirmish Line of Spring," the smell of "pure ice water running over leaves." Nor will you, in an upland pasture, find the south side of a stone wall from which

the snow has just gone and lie down there to get "your first lazy feel of Mother Earth" and to catch "the first subtle ground smell of the Spring."

It may be that shared confidences like these have disarmed us, so that we cannot take that severe judicial attitude toward the remaining papers or toward the writing as a whole, which critics affect. But we never loved that attitude nor shall we cultivate it. Here is a man who has made us forget that he is a "lecturer on dramatic topics," a writer and a critic used to metropolitan airs and atmospheres. To have sloughed these off in so many pleasant pages is a considerable distinction. It is praiseworthy from our new viewpoint of humanism, according to which this or that is done, not to prove one's versatility but as a mode of living.

When we live again in a page we know the page to be authentic. And this is why we prefer "Glacier Park Wild Flowers" to "Glacier Park" itself, which is more descriptive, more pictorial and journalistic. In the first we renew our own happy encounters with boreal florets, forgetful of exact topography. We chime assent when Eaton writes,

> But the real gem of the Arctic summits is the moss campion. This exquisite and gay little pink, its blossoms like innumerable petalled pinheads in a green cushion, braves the loftiest altitudes and caps the most stupendous precipices. It must make fodder for the mountain sheep and goats, and it certainly brings joy to the heart of the climber. Often, under the shelter of a rock . . . a dwarf garden of such dainty charm that you have to kneel beside it and admire.

"You have to kneel beside it"; action again. In all such passages and pages you are climbing, moving, every way participating in the changeful out-of-door experience. You are no water-logged brig of a student moored at contemplative wharf. Nor are you likely to enjoy these excursions vicariously. Chiefly, they are done for a stirring, for a revival of that which you already have experienced, but which slumbers. Revived, you will climb again, if you are sound. You will renew your participation. That done, you may go as far as you like beyond these moods—in your own imaginings.

The Eaton juvenile books, we saw, tend to confirm an outdoor habit and to create an attitude favorable to wild nature. Without such an attitude on the part of many there can be no hope for efficient conservation. Books for Boy Scouts may not be literature, but they extend the base on which literatures can be founded. As such a constructive work we gladly acknowledge them. Essays for mature persons contribute tangibly to such literature, and stimulate the habits which produce it.

"It is surprising what a large number of us never see the sky, never see it intimately," Eaton writes in a chapter of "Weather." That remark should set many a drowsing adult eye reconsidering its upper environment, of which the human lore has been almost forgotten, given over to experts. No proper view of the heavens, from a naturist's viewpoint, can be anything but "intimate." He who, for his sins, is bound to a

swivel chair through most of the hours of daylight may at least right that relation, in his small margin of daylight . . . but hardly in a closed car or a subway train linking one indoors to another without respite. Let him revise our "civilization," somehow, to the point of tolerance for a sky-scape. It is his private problem, and let him look to it.

Again, if one cannot at once lose himself in Maine woods or travel the trails that lead by Western glaciers, and if the sky itself seems to resent his long neglect of it, turns him a cold shoulder, let him descend a step and find that lower world which Eaton has described as "The Land Below the River Bank." With that essay as a guide he may discover much that is lost to his fellow townsmen. This will be true whether his river winds along "through the Berkshire intervales" or beds itself in the shales of the Chemung country, the Delaware or the Susquehanna; true even of little streams that carve the glacial clays in northern Ohio. These beds and their marginal spits of sand and woodland are lost to our modern world. They are natural refuges for a varied plant life, and a corresponding fauna. And if one imagined that the lore of such lands died with Thoreau let him look again. There are clues in this essay. To many it will be revelation. And behind the text lies the reality, as with all true nature writing.

## LIBERTY H. BAILEY

HIDDEN in a most unlikely place, where no one but a research man would have thought of looking for it, is a sketch which contains Dr. Bailey's intimate and special approach to nature—his way of seeing it. It is a study in retrospect, done twenty-five years ago and carrying impressions received long before that. It makes a chapter in a book, but it marks an outlook: "An Outlook on Winter," [1] according to the title. It is much more than that.

Here in these charming pages nature is a brook. The brook is mystery. But it is intimate and friendly. It is a boy's first lure and guide, his changeful yet ever-recognized companion and recurrent happiness. A grown man writes the chapter and deepens the interpretation—without losing the first values. He records his own mental changes, which took him first away from, then back to this fortunate relation.

My affection for the brook gave way to a study of plants and animals and stones. For years I was absorbed in phenomena. But now mere phenomena and materials have slipped into a secondary place, and the old boyhood slowly reasserts

[1] Dr. Bailey himself has directed me to this paper in "The Nature Study Idea," first published in 1903. There have been several later editions. New York, 1920.

itself. I am sure that I know the brook better because I know more about the things that live in its little world; yet that same mystery pervades it and there is that same longing for the things that lie beyond. I remember that in the old days I did not mind the rain and the sleet when visiting the brook. I was not conscious that they were not a part of the brook itself. It was only when I began to dress up that the rain annoyed me. . . . We are coming together again now.

Then he talks of the changes which winter makes. They are only added revelations, dubiously regarded by those who apply indoor standards. Weather is not a human institution and this friendship with the brook is not to be interfered with by human prejudices. The closing paragraph rounds it off with this:

Our interest in the out-of-doors should be a perennial current that overflows from a fountain that lies deep within us. This interest is colored and modified by every passing season, but fundamentally it is beyond time and place. Winter or no winter, it matters not: the fields lie beyond.

It is unforunate that we have to judge the value of nature-study in education by the results as most of us know them. With all his varied responsibilities and interests Dr. Bailey found time to champion what has been called the "Nature Study Idea" and to interpret it. If the results have not been all we could have hoped, we need not blame the sponsor. You cannot graft a living bud upon the heart wood of any tree, but only upon living growing tissue where cells are plastic and multiplying. The idea which this educator wished to graft was a living, growing thing, but the system upon which it had to be bound was and is largely wooden. To

those who asked for ponderable results this mover in a widely popular movement replied, "If I could give a statistical measure . . . I should consider the work to have been a failure." And he said to teachers, "For nature subjects, the first essential is an intense love of nature." He added, "We attempt to teach this nature-love in the schools, and we call the effort nature-study. It would be better if it were called nature-sympathy . . . it cannot be reduced to a mere system, is not cut and dried, cannot become a part of rigid and formal school method. Its very essence is spirit."

Reading this declaration, which of course has been violated a thousand times in practice, one feels a certain sympathy with those who hold that nothing good can ever be "taught." As it is with nature-subjects so it is with literature. But what will you? The schools are here, and the homes are not conserving our arts of interpretation, whose "very essence is spirit."

Himself an educator, it is not strange that Liberty H. Bailey should have tried to bring into the life of the schools a redeeming spirit of understanding, of response to the world we live in, and that a part of his effort should have been directed explicitly toward the success of such an undertaking. It may be an idealistic, an almost hopeless prospect that he spreads before us when he remarks that "It is due to every child that his mind be opened to the voices of nature," when he adds that "all the senses should be so trained and adjusted that all our world becomes alive to us." Grant it hope-

less—but is it not admirable? And further, one might ask, would not such a training be as valuable to that middle unexceptional stratum of intelligences who at present are being prepared for a vague and pointless goal called "graduation"?

In any case, it appeals to us personally, to read of a world of finer listenings and closer distinctions which is ours for the taking; a world to which we have not been dulled entirely, or we should never have drifted into these pages. Here it is:

> The world is always quick with sounds, although our ears are closed to them. Every person hears the loud songs of birds, the sweep of heavy winds and the rush of rapid rivers or the sea; but the small voices with which we live are known not to one in ten thousand. To be able to distinguish the notes of the different birds is one of the choicest resources in life . . . it is but a step from this to the other small voices—of the insects, the frogs and toads, the mice, the domestic animals, the flow of quiet waters, and the noises of the little winds.

How many of us can select unerringly out of the summer air the note of the tree cricket, whether in Delaware or in California? Yet that note is one of the most rewarding of consolations, and perhaps the only one of its class that has the secret of tone—is not a mere stridulation. The memory of it, but lately heard during this writing, compensates a little for the curse of the loud speaker dominant in our new Western darkness.

* * * * *

We pass lightly over the quarter century that lies

between the lines quoted and his latest writing; for we are not describing a life but an attitude toward life. In the "Background Books" we have a series of seven, that burn like the golden candle-stick of sacred fame in their proper niche. Their light does not compete with our electroliers of literature. It might have been fed by oil from an olive tree. It is quiet, clear, softening, does not bring into relief those sharp angles which our more brilliant arcs and flares are forever revealing. Indeed it is fed from trees—if not the olive then our own native woods, the life of them. Trees, grasses, the rain, the earth, the winds—all this life has gone into them and becomes luminous.

"The Harvest" is one of the latest and best of them. In it we come to know the author thoroughly. He has been close not only to the natural world but to those who live by it. For he does not arbitrarily detach nature wild from nature in cultivation. He will not tolerate a schism there. Sympathizer though he is with the world of untamed things, he reaches out to the other, that feeds us—would bind the two under one common understanding. In all of these books he speaks to and for the native farm-dwellers; interprets, utters them.

He does this because he is of them, and has not forgotten. The chapter on "My Father's Hoe" reveals it. A page is here devoted to the venerable flintlock that hangs in his workroom, but major honors are for the hoe. It hangs there too, and proves a relic worthy the chapter. It carries a man's impress. Here is the man:

Six-foot-one he stood, and yet he scarcely stooped; with his right hand he grasped the handle near its end and always in the same way, with the thumb lengthwise on the wood, the four fingers clasped underneath, and the end of the stock not projecting from the back of the hand. Four inches from the end a hollow has been worn by the ball of the thumb, and underneath are furrows where the fingers grasped.

And here is the memory, entering into his sound-life; a persistent memory of slow wakings in the early mornings of a farm-environed boyhood:

Clish, clish, clish in an even rhythmic easy subdued cadence the hoe moved up and down the rows, never chopping, never hacking, never faltering, for my father was a hoeman as another man might be a welder or a wheelwright, taking pride in the skill of his handiwork. Very smooth and even the ground was left, with a thin loose surface such as in the later sophisticated days we came to know as the earth-mulch.

In this and many scores of like passages, of fruitful pages, we come to feel that here is one who has succeeded in his intent, has truly bound together the life of response with the life of production. Is that a small thing to have accomplished? It bodes well for rural life in the future . . . if men are found who can live in a like spirit. Such words are like a Bible, a testament that belongs to our rural inheritance. Here it exists as literature. There it may exist as living—and find new modes for expression when tall strong men can no longer be hoemen but must use their stature for seeing over the short limits of their private interest to some communal end in country living.

There are such ends. L. H. Bailey has written of them

practically and discerningly. His "Country Life Movement" takes up precisely those questions which confront a city man who would like to live on the land but does not know the way of it—the means, modes, hazards, the predictable disasters that have wrecked so many well-intentioned efforts. There are those who cannot subsist from the land, by production. These are warned. There are those who can if they will. These will not be following a dreamer.

But our chief debt will be, not to a man who gives practical counsel to those who care for a rural life and would like to achieve it: it will be to one who understands a common and compelling spirit of response to the values in that life, which all must care for and uphold by their respect and practical regard if society is to find its human meaning complete in a naturist's background.

## WILLIAM BEEBE

TO the initiated, Mr. Beebe's peculiar quality as natural magician reveals itself in so small a specimen of his writing that it would seem superfluous to cite a large amount of it. One might say of his pages, there they are: read them. If the pages are from "Jungle Peace," or "Edge of the Jungle," it ought to be enough. Rustle them, turn them, light upon a paragraph and read it: the magic slips out. It is a fairy-tale world . . . which happens to be a real one. Droll, like the creations of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (*Lewis Carroll*), and often quite as improbable. One enjoys the incongruity of the happenings, for the same reason one enjoys them in "Alice," in her various incarnations. It does not trouble us that this time they are true. We can overlook the fact that William Beebe is a scientist. He is that, oh, surely . . . but not a solemn one. His spry humor covers a multitude of scientific sins.

This is no small achievement. We are being fed facts about a place called Kartabo. (The book at our elbow is "Edge of the Jungle.") Perhaps we are. But we shall survive it. We knew that on the very first page, when we discovered the author, who was about

to shift habitations, comparing himself to a hermit crab in the same case.

> The difference between our estates was that the hermit crab sought only for food, I chiefly for strange new facts—which was a distinction as trivial as that he achieved his desires sideways and on eight legs, while I traversed my environment forward and generally on two.

A trivial difference, an amiable sympathy so to recognize it: there we have our naturist placed. It does not matter much, really, whether Kartabo is in Ceylon, Guinea or Guiana. What matters, is that here we have a scientist who is not so important with his science that he is obsessed by it, but is alive to all the little rustling sounds and whispers of wonder that are astir in his tropical world . . . and can tell about them without flaunting an unknown language of many Latin syllables, or reminding us of our dense ignorance, which it will be his privilege to illumine—and underscore. This man knows his science, but he knows it so well that he is at ease in it and has leisure to give us that fine and subtle background which means so much more to us than the cumbrous facts of our world.—For it is *our world* this new kind of writer is writing about. Instinctively we know that. It is not the world of an entomologist-taxonomist-ecologist and recorder of facts. It is one in which the entire procession of baggage carriers has to step around a toad which, at the top of a stair-case, faces them with "that dignity, poise, and perfect self-possession which only a toad, a giant

grandmother of a toad, can exhibit," and toward which (or whom?) the new tenant's feelings are "mingled, but altogether kindly."—The "mingled" feelings we appropriate at once; the "altogether kindly" will be an extension of experience for some of us. We may acquire them by contagion—who knows?

The jungle comes to this bungalow in Kartabo "through the air, on wings of skin or feathers or tissue membrane; crawling or leaping by night; burrowing underground; gnawing up through the great supporting posts; swarming up the bamboos and along the pliant curving stems to drop quietly on the shingled roof." When it comes, and during the process of its coming, there is an alert person there to perceive and enjoy it, sifting its weirdness and extracting a droll-but-true Wonderland tale. Such are the pages. Read them.

And yet one would not think of saying that Mr. Beebe is a "popular" writer: not until that word has been renovated and redeemed from unfortunate associations. He is one of the few of whose writing one would say almost without reflection, "This will last." It seems a matter of course. How could a book like this wear out? There is nothing labored in it, yet the pages spill metaphors that a hack would require hours to think out:

> From high overhead a sprawling tarantula tossed aside the shriveled remains of his night's banquet, the emerald cuirass and empty mahogany helmet of a long-horned beetle, which eddied downward and landed upon my sheet.

That might be in a novel—in the Conrad class of

novels—but I prefer it here. For, after all, the world which is here being spun for us into fresh reality is not a world of dismal human plots and contortions but one of nature into which all sorts of things are harmonized—death even—without those tragic grimaces which the man-sort are wont to make when the spectre faces them. It is a naturist's world. And, taking our cue from that, if we turn now to an earlier work, "Jungle Peace," we shall find how a naturist approaches it.

> If one looks the jungle straight in the face and transcribes what is seen, there is evolved technical science, and until this can be done with accuracy and discretion, one can never feel worthy, now and then, of stealing quietly up a side aisle of the great green wonderland, and, as I have done in these pages, looking obliquely at all things, observing them as actors and companions rather than as species and varieties; softening facts with quiet meditation, leavening science with thoughts of the sheer joy of existence.[1]

There is the essence, not so much of a creed as of a methodology plus an attitude, admirably stated. He would "leaven science with thoughts of the sheer joy of existence." He that can do that belongs in this brotherhood. But let a novice note that it is science that he so leavens: not a brood of literary fancies.

He is "looking obliquely"—not directly, ponderously, precisely—at the creatures that move in this nature world. Perhaps that is the only way to see them truly, "as actors and companions." And since the oblique light is also the comic light, as Meredith long

ago showed us in a famous essay, his world often has a saving quality of the comic spirit, as we saw in the "Edge of the Jungle"; as we see when we turn to the chapter entitled *Sea-Wrack* in "Jungle Peace." There he gives us a peep at New York City from the plane which he pilots; sees its folk with the eyes of an insect observer—"all hats and legs . . . the makers and owners of these beetles and worms and canyons." But sometimes there is the sting of satire. When things more mysterious and admirable than comic are to be seen, he, rightly, resents the common attitude toward them:

> I looked up and saw pale-green shadows, a thread of silver surf and the rounded mountains of a tropical island. And I frowned with impatience . . . for the island had been spoiled for me. . . . Effeminate men, childish women and spoiled children diluted or wholly eclipsed every possible scene. The obvious was made blatant, the superficial was imagined subtle, the glories of silent appreciation were shattered by garrulous nothings.

Those who give tongue with such a tourist pack will not be among his readers.

But a naturist will wear out the pack. When they have all drifted away he will remain, watching. Then his resentment will fall away, his mood will change, will turn, and his thought will take the mode of fantasy. The whole horizon, a moment ago smeared with the ship-deck chatter and futility, now becomes a thing of dignity and mystery. But it is not accident . . . or not an accident that will happen to chatterers. It took

effort to efface the memory of the other thing—it took a deliberate surrender to the influence of the magic agents, space and darkness and light. Of such influences, and the effect of his surrender to them this author writes: "It seemed as if my thought, Buddha-powerful —had actually wrought the magic of wide-spread change." There follow pages of evocation. These pages cannot be called by that trite term "description." That is for amateurs. And this evocation is not pertinent to a scientific paper. It narrates no facts, expounds no theories, clarifies no cloudy conceptions. It belongs to the new literature of nature. It is magical, allied to the poetical, yet with a background of strict and true observation. Not all men may aspire to it, for not all men have the patience.

And the power to control one's mood, to experience and express in words the "numinous" does not come at once, or by accident. If we take up a much earlier work of the same author's—"Two Bird Lovers in Mexico"—we shall find nothing but a travel-book, of brisk and bright observations; accurate always, and deft enough as to language, but wanting that quality which lifts a work to the level of real writing. Thirteen years—and the Great War—have intervened between the two productions. This last is done "after creeping through slime-filled holes beneath the shrieking of swift metal, after splashing one's plane through companionable clouds three miles above the little jagged hero-filled ditches, and dodging other sudden-born clouds of

nauseous fumes and blasting heart of steel. . . . And when nerves have cried for a time 'enough' and an unsteady hand threatens to turn a joy-stick into a sign-post to Charon, the mind seeks amelioration—some symbol worth of content and peace." Under such conditions this author's mind turns to the jungles of the tropics—and finds in them both peace and healing.

It is an inestimable boon to be able so to turn; to have the key and mode-of-knowing which will unlock this peace of the jungle, so that a man's mind finds both solace and diversion in what might appear to another as dread, discomfort and danger. More perhaps than any other living American, William Beebe has had such a key and such a mode of knowing, with an adequate power of expression gained by care with words, by sincere and eager utterance. He has made himself an essayist, and kept himself a fresh observer, avoiding all the common pitfalls, letting his subject speak through him. He is true to the moment, always —and not heedless of its further reaches.

> It came upon me during early nights, again and again, that this was Now, and that into the hour-glass of Now was headed a maelstrom of untold riches of the Future—minutes and hours and sapphire days ahead—a Now which was wholly unconcerned with leagues and liquor, with strikes and salaries. So I turned over with the peace which passes all telling—the forecast of delving into the private affairs of birds and monkeys, of great butterflies and strange frogs and flowers. The seeping wind had led my mind on and on from memory and distant sorrows to thoughts of the joy of labor and of life.[1]

[1] From "The Edge of the Jungle," p. 22. New York, 1921.

A man who can have thoughts like these, and adequately express them, is not trapped in the intracies of his research, not victimized by some chimera of speculative theory, not swept away by those winds of intellect that so often make arid the mind of a scholar —when there is no soul there, it went with life and youth—his soul is in each Now, and expands it. How many ever think of Now as an hour-glass, with the past pouring through a narrow neck into a future! A man's life is his own supreme metaphor. This one speaks of endless renewal.

* * * * *

When one has threaded more and more jungle, trodden the sharp talus of Galapagos with this far-flung observer, lured giant sea-lizards from the deep as if by incantation and plunges thence into the "Arcturus Adventure" he feels—although the tale is not yet done—that here is a mortal who has had more than his fair share of the world's seeing. And when, on an early page of the Arcturus record he comes on the figure of *Diabolidium arcturi Beebe,* black, sinister, silhouetted in startling profile, he begins to dread the worst: that his trusted guide has succumbed to the enemy's snare at last, and now bids for popularity by purveying sensation. But no. He has not. The text quiets that misgiving. The Little Sea Devil of the Arcturus, with Mr. Beebe's name at the tail of his taxonomic kite, is there, large as life, and, in fact, larger;

but in the paragraphs all about him lie the easy levels of Mr. Beebe's prose. There the little facts of the Sargasso days float like the pipe-fish in his bucket, that "imitate the undulation of a waving frond." Like them, his art can hardly be detected, since it blends with its background and one seems to be seeing only what any one would see if he were there. There is no excitement about it, and as for sensation features, they give place once more to that habit of deliberate observation which we have come to know as the mark of a good guide. indeed, he is more than ever conscious of it, as can be proved by this passage:

> I took a little three-inch frond of weed into the laboratory and watched it under my binocular microscope. I pretended the common little inhabitants were rare and began to observe instead of merely to see them. There were three kinds of hydroids—the palms, the trees and the spiked clubs, all superlatively dainty and elegant, foresting these diminutive gardens of the sea. Here and there were more formal plantings, row upon row of beautiful ivory or alabaster chalices, from which sprang severe fountains of tentacles—minute bryozoan or moss animals—all arranged just so, like the alabaster vases of Italian gardens. The bryozoan beds were exquisite when their occupants were dead and gone. The sere and autumn of the moss animals' year left a mosaic of thousands of flattened hexagons as perfect as honeycombs, as translucent as age-old moonstone.

This, then, is what our Arcturus adventurer calls observing. It is quite clearly a naturist's seeing: that is, a heightened and humanized perception. It does not deny that these organisms have their niches in the scientific series; that some are hydroids, others

bryozoans. It merely gives those forms a value, and a human value, by recognizing in them the likeness of other forms which we remember for their beauty. It relates and absorbs these (to many of us) new forms into that beauty.

But without the slightest effort at sensation-mongering some quiet descriptions shape themselves into forms of arresting strangeness; as when the watcher encounters in his plancton bucket a larval form of eel. A few of these quotations must satisfy us, and readers who are greedy for more must go to the source of them; but this one has the solution of wonder in it:

> I looked at a small aquarium of plancton and saw a half dozen mother-of-pearl eyes swimming around quite by themselves. This was after I had been studying plancton for a few dozen hauls, and had passed the stage of wondering whether excess of microscopic work was working injury to my eyesight. Yet even now I did not quite believe what I saw, until I dipped in my hand and lifted out a twelve-inch piece of flexible water. There was absolutely no structure to be seen except the gleaming eyes, and yet here was a living fish. When dead and preserved, the body, shaped like a long thin willow leaf, became translucent and then it was possible to make out the hundred-odd delicate segments and the all but invisible gills and stomach.

The rest of the story belongs to a science which is, of course, both the excuse and the foundation for this author's observations. That he goes beyond its formal requirements is what intrigues us. He transcends it. He sows the seeds of wonder and feeds them on what we may fairly say is truth—not titillation.

And that is how he avoids, as we said before, certain pitfalls. Since the truth is strange enough, he conveys it without condiments. Since it will be of lasting worth, he clothes it with fitting language. Since the picture he wishes to impress is unrelated to urban time he links it with far rhythmic events that seem timeless. And yet he can be casually simple and natural all the while, —if you like "realistic"—alternating his aesthetic intangibles with "the rumble and clank of the winch," or the clatter of typewriters and the thudding sound of the Van Slyke machine operated by a chemist. Thus the more literal-minded are not alarmed or fearful of being driven away from that safe anchorage in dependable fact to which our age has accustomed them.

If the author of so many fascinating books ("Log of the Sun," "Our Search for a Wilderness," "Tropical Wild Life," "Galapagos: World's End," and latest of all, "Beneath Tropic Seas," are among those not here quoted) has sacrificed any qualities of depth and philosophic reflection in order to keep close to his readers we cannot feel that he lacks those qualities. They seem everywhere potential. They are like the oceanic depths over which his ship sails and toward which he now and then drops a sounding line: always aware of them he can be vivid but not trivial. From time to time we get glimpses of a deep into which spent life vanishes, and a meaning which rounds out our surface clues; but that meaning somehow includes life and zest and health—not their negation.

To sum up our positives: we have fallen upon good days when we can yield to the charm of this nature-writing which is William Beebe's. We have a good guide, and an amiable one. Authenticated expert (Director of Research for the New York Zoölogical Society) he has been an amiable human person, equating his claims with those of a hermit-crab, tolerant to innumerable dubious beasts, courteous to toads, and a good chum to our naturistic President Roosevelt. His personal attributes are well known—no need during his life-time to dwell on them—and there is no more widely recognized figure in American science. Even the cartoonists have featured him. A keen and a healthy zest in observing the natural world, and the gift of sharing his wide-ranging experience: these are the dynamic of it, and the product is permanent.

But when we speak of a "product" we are thinking of something objective, something "outside of us" which can be appraised as silk might be, or ivory; so much good prose which experts shall classify and rank as exploration, tropical or maritime research, or what-not, and withal so much naturistic essay to be laid side by side with the dreamier wander-work of W. H. Hudson. There is another aspect, less objective. We have now to consider it.

* * * * *

More than any other writer of the group we have been considering Mr. Beebe is of *our time,* and of our

mode, our approach and comprehension. He has not required the exacting concentration of mood that some have asked of us before their mood could be ours. He has his technique, however, and is good enough to share it with us. On page 76 of "The Arcturus Adventure" he describes what he calls "a foolish little game" which he learned from some unnamed person.

> It consists merely in shutting your eyes when you are in the midst of a great moment, or close to some marvel in time and space, and convincing yourself that you are at home again with the experience over and past; and what would you wish most to have examined or done if you could turn time and space back again?

No such little game is "foolish" if it helps clear consciousness, helps relate things, helps fix the pregnant moment of *impression.* It is a technique of awareness. Every important author has used some technique, or his later work would be worthless. Not every author has described his, no two can be exactly alike, and this one by no means exhausts what lies behind the fruitful writing of William Beebe. It is however a good clue for amateurs—for those of us who will not be satisfied with the set habits we have acquired but will be always learning new modes to enrich and develop the life of expression. The life of expression, we will have realized by now, is closely linked with the life of impression; and that is hardly an accident. It is not even a "gift." It is something we cultivate deliberately because we care a great deal for the values it yields—for an intenser delight in experience, an increased power to keep

that timed happiness and transfer it into timeless forms.

Furthermore, those who have followed Mr. Beebe through his earlier, middle and latest phases of literary creativeness will know that it is not entirely in these later brilliant and sometimes almost blinding diversities of experience, nor in his hint for their intensifying and fixing as impression, that we are likely to gain the most lasting clues. These latest adventures in and under tropic seas do indeed clear and convey and perpetuate a wealth of strangeness and bring its details into focus. The lore of them may not so certainly give initiation into that peculiar mode of seeing which pertains to a true naturist's world. It may even bring—to some who read too swiftly and greedily—a sense of satiety, as if all had been told, and there were no more to be sensed and seen; or at least no more that a novice might hope to sense and see for himself. That would be fatal to our subjective mood. It is initiation, not satiety that we seek. And I think we shall find a safer, a surer initiation in such a passage as this, from "Jungle Peace," a less spectacular book than either of the two latest:

> Tired from a long day's work in the laboratory, I wandered slowly along the Convict Trail, aimlessly, in that wholly relaxed state which always seems to invite small adventures. It is a mental condition wholly desirable, but not achieved consciously. One cannot say, "Lo, I will now be relaxed, receptive." It must come subconsciously, unnoticed, induced by a certain wearied content of body or mind—and then—many secret doors stand ajar, any one of which may be opened and passed if the gods approve.

This appears to be in direct contradiction to the hint previously quoted. It is only a clue—and a right one—to another aspect of the same nature-world: an aspect that concerns us all more intimately and far more familiarly than those a Director of Research might meet with on ship devoted to Science and Seeing, or under a helmet, perched on spire of coral underseas.

The incident that rewarded the relaxed mood in this case—or rather the immediate incident, for there were two of them—is so incomparably droll that it can be fully appreciated only in the pages of a Beebe book. However, it can be quoted, for it is brief, out of kindness to readers who may not readily lay hands on the volume from which it is taken:

> For several weeks the jolly little trail-lizards had been carrying on most enthusiastic courtships, marked with much bowing and posing, and a terrific amount of scrambling about. The previous day—that of the first rains—numbers of lizardlets appeared, and at the same time the brown tree-lizards initiated their season of love-making. I had often watched them battle with one another—combats wholly futile as far as any damage was concerned. But the vanquished invariably gave up to his conqueror the last thing he had swallowed, the victor receiving it in a gluttonly rather than a gracious spirit, but allowing his captive to escape. I surprised one of these dark-brown chaps in the trail and seized him well up toward the head, to preserve his tail intact. Hardly had I lifted him from the ground, when he turned his head, considered me calmly with his bright little eyes, and forthwith solemnly spat out a still living ant in my direction. The enquiring look he gave me was exceedingly embarrassing. Who was I not to be bound in chivalry by the accredited customs of his race?
>
> With dignity and certainty of acceptance he had surrendered, calmly and without doubt he had proffered his little

substitute of sword. It was, I felt, infinitely preferable to any guttural and cowardly "kamarad!" Feeling rather shamefaced I accepted the weakly struggling ant, gently lowered the small saurian to the ground and opened my fingers. He went as he had surrendered, with steadiness and without terror. From the summit of a fallen log he turned and watched me walk slowly out of sight, and I at least felt the better for the encounter.

The next episode, coming directly after this one, might be said to be more "typical," more in the tradition of our best essayist-observers. It is rather too long to quote entire. Those who care for comparisons may look it up and lay it alongside of a similar description of butterflies at rest in W. H. Hudson's "Nature in Downland"; found also in Garnett's excellent "Anthology" of the same author.[2]

Abridge the passage we must; but we cannot spare it, nor could we if we wanted to, blot it from our memory. Passing by the description of the Heliconias, and omitting any statistical comments, we find this:

This glade was my private property, and the way by which one reached it from the nearby Convict Trail was a pressure trail, not a cut one. One pushed one's way through the reeds, which flew back, revealing nothing. . . . I saw that an unusual number of heliconias were flitting about the glade, both species, the Reds and the Yellows. All were fluttering slowly about as I watched, one by one they alighted on the very tips of bare twigs, upside down with closed wings. In this position they were almost invisible, even a side view showing the subdued under-wing pigments which blended with the pastel colors of twilight in the glade, reflected from variegated leaves

[2] P. 113 of "A Hudson Anthology," Edward Garnett, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1924.

and from the opening blossoms of the scarlet passion vine. . . . They presented no surface to the rain of the night, and all faced northeast—the certain direction of both rain and wind. . . .

When I disturbed them, they flew up in a colorful flurry, flapped about for a minute or less and returned, each to its particular perch. After two or three gentle waves of the wings and a momentary shifting of feet they settled again to perfect rest. . . . No matter how often they were disturbed they never made a mistake in the number of their cabin. A certain section of a particular twig on a definite branch was the resting place of some one heliconia, and he always claimed it.

Several were bright and fresh, newly emerged, but the remainder were somewhat faded and chipped at the edges. The delicate little beings slept soundly. I waited until dusk began finally to settle down and crept gently toward a Red-spot. I brought my face close and aroused no sign of life. Then I reached up and slowly detached the butterfly from its resting place. It moved its feet slightly, but soon became quiet. Then I gently replaced it, and at the touch of the twig its feet took a new hold. . . . I wondered if I was the first scientist to pluck a sleepy butterfly from a jungle tree and replace it unawakened. I wondered if heliconias ever dreamed. . . . These were my thoughts rather than later meditations on whether this might not be a sort of atavistic social instinct, faintly reminiscent of their caterpillar youth.

From any point of view I shall think better of all butterflies for this discovery; their desire for company, the instinctive wisdom of place and posture, the gentleness and silence of the little foregathering in the jungle. As I walked back along the trail several late comers passed me, vibrating softly through the twilight, headed for their glade of dreams.

He will think better of all butterflies, and we shall think better of William Beebe, in whose receptive mind (that did not say "I will be relaxed," but was so) all this scene was dramatized; and who could spare some

of the learned inferences that might have been made, for the sake of a rare susceptive picture in which the genus man—our poor bewildered Homo—becomes sponsor for Jungle peace and a conscious guardian of its airy nothings, the spotted heliconias.

## ERNEST THOMPSON SETON

ERNEST SETON was born in S. Shields, Durham, England, but spent his earliest childhood in North American backwoods. He has his home and holding in the State of Connecticut. Nature, and particularly animal nature, in America has always occupied his brush and his pen. No name is better known than his, in a particular field, and in it he has had no important competitors during the time his prolific work has appeared—through the first quarter of this century, more than one book a year.

The book with which this author burst into sudden fame is linked with a controversy that it is needless to stir again. At the time when "Wild Animals I Have Known" was printed (in 1897) and ran through its ten editions the first year, John Burroughs was living and an impersonal, colorless accuracy was held by him and others to be the essence of a nature writer's creed. The name "naturist" had not been proposed for a particular class of seers of nature. Science existed, and its popularization. No subjective side of our seeing was recognized as important. This new prophet of the animal world, being both ardent and an artist, brought to his writings subjective seeing, inspired with truth as all real art is inspired; but his imitators produced romantic stories, merely.

"Wild Animals I Have Known" is not "nature-faking." The old issue is dead. If readers of these romances go west and do not find individual wolves and mustangs equal in resourcefulness and intelligence to those they have been reading of, they may be disappointed: they will not be seriously hurt. No more will they find Kit Carson and Buffalo Bill. The old heroes are gone. Animals themselves have changed. Those rude and acquisitive bears that now hold up tourists more greedily than any tramp did not exist in the old days, or even in the days described in the earlier Thompson Seton books. They have evolved under the influence of a civilization that breeds parasitism both in men and in beasts.

The books we are considering tend to counteract precisely such ill effects in ourselves. Later on—much later—they may begin to benefit the beasts, whose denaturing we, and not any nature-writers, have begun to bring about by indirect and unintentional means. We cannot much benefit the animals or elevate the wild creatures in the way of improving their morale. We may very considerably improve our own, and all of the Seton books tend that way.

As literature, "Wild Animals I Have Known" is less important than some books that followed, in the same genre. It tells its tales vividly and with intense imaginative sympathy. But in the "Biography of a Grizzly" which was written two years later, there is power in the telling; power of more than one kind.

In the first place it is written in plain, unadorned and therefore dignified narrative style. It can be valued for that. In the second place it has the gift of irony, with restraint. After Colonel Pickett has shot the mother grizzly and three of her cubs the page says, "The Colonel seemed pleased with what he had done; indeed, he told of it himself." And no reader, however young, misses the point, for his sympathy is with the victims; the narrative saw to that. For like reasons, "The Trail of the Sandhill Stag" leaves a permanent impression. In both works the author's illustrations are effective and memorable.

Twenty years later, when "Bannertail" appears (in the same genre) we notice several important changes. The marginal sketches are not taken seriously—they are quite whimsical and amusing—but the full-page pictures are done with care. They are extremely good drawing, and most pleasing as compositions. The writing is still in the plain narrative English that has already been commended, and, even in a book which is obviously written for young folks it rises at times to a poetic intensity that makes it very exceptional as prose for juveniles. A few classics like Kingsley's "Water Babies" have this quality and can hold a child's interest. "Bannertail" distinctly holds it. A youngster has nothing to fear. The "style" is subordinate to the story. There are no tiresome "descriptions." If certain scenes are felt intensely it is as you or I, if we were a squirrel, might feel them. From first to last

the tale is rich with out-of-door sense and heady with adventure. As behavior lore I do not find it over-drawn. As woods-lore it is full of illumination. Compare this bit about hibernation with any plodding paragraph in natural history; it heads the pages on "The Cold Sleep," itself a charming caption.

> Next day there was a driving storm of snow, and whether the sun came up or not Bannertail did not know. He kept his nest, and, falling back on an ancient spend-time of the folk he kins with, he curled up into a sleep that deepened with the cold. This is partly a deliberate sleep. The animal voluntarily lets go, knowing that life outside is unattractive; he, by an act of the will, induces the cold sleep, that is like a chapter of forgetfulness, with neither hunger nor desire, and after it is over, no pain in punishment or remorse.

Besides its appeal as literature we find by reading the preface that this particular nature-story has several aims that could be classed as belonging to natural history. These the author states plainly, so that there can be no possible misunderstanding. Briefly put, they are:

First, that a wild animal, while it owes much to imitation (of the mother) it owes more to the racial teaching, which is instinct, and can survive by means of the latter alone, if it lives through infancy;

Second, that animals are prone to fall into habits that correspond to our "immorality," and that nature deals with such habits severely;

Third, that animals must "maintain ceaseless war against insect parasites, or perish";

Fourth, that the nut-bearing trees of our forests are

planted by grey squirrels or their kin. "No squirrels, no nut-trees."

Happily, no one objects to a nature-novel, "with a purpose." And since there are these motive thoughts, why not state them clearly?

I do not believe that Ernest Thompson Seton would care to have his books remembered only as literature, nor would any naturist. He has his contribution to make to those "motive thoughts"—I am using Seton's own phrase, from this same preface—which make up our feeling for nature. That is his truest function in the book-world, and in all the ways by which his influence sways us. This feeling for the world about us is not merely an emotional one, not purely a sentiment. It forms an attitude, bends our behavior, enlarges our mental horizon. It may even become active in legislation; but more effective than any law is the regard we have for living things in their unspoiled relations. That feeling is of slow growth and we owe it very largely to our nature writers. It is they who have diffused the sentiment. In Wilson's time we have seen that American robins could be shot for sport or bagged for the pot by thousands, in Pennsylvania. His remonstrance was not fanatic, it was mild—hardly more than a statement of the fact that such destruction was being practiced. But this made people aware of it. That was enough. The books we are considering align themselves with a like purpose—diffuse a similar motive—but with a more conscious art. And yet such books can-

not be called propaganda. They are rather the slow flowering of a natural humanism, which our American public desires and can understand as fast as its mind matures to their level.

Before we leave this little volume, which has served so well as a type of what its author's later fiction stands for, see how easily the beauty-touch slips into a plain passage, beguiling a reader before he has become aware of it, much as the stream would do in nature. Delight would come to him there, before awareness.

> Next in importance to the Squirrels . . . was the brook that carried down scraps of the blue sky to inlay them with green moss, purple logs, and gold-brown stones, that sang its low sweet song both day and night, that furnished to the family their daily drink.
>
> "Do not drink at the pond" is a Squirrel maxim, for in it lurks the fearful Snapping Turtle and the grinning Pike. . . .

—And so, between the casual news of changing scene and the fast-following news of action, something is done before a sentinel sense can offer challenge: that softer perception of the beauty in things, which a boy shuns because he deems it effeminate, imparts its touch, as it ought to do if the boy is not to remain a savage. And it is better too, if this service has to be done for the boy, that it come from a man whose mark is that of a major manhood. There can be no charge of effeminacy in the influence of this veteran woodsman. Quite apart from authorship, the figure of the man is convincing.

Like all intimates of the forest folk this sponsor of

the beasts had his own preferences for isolation. He had segregated his own bit of natural woodland in the Appalachian domain, and protected it as he might, from violation. The natural instincts of hunting man threatened his seclusion. Time and again boys who regarded all wild land as their natural right broke into his private woods. But, unlike other proprietors and owners of similar sites, he understood them. Respecting the deep urge underneath their apparent law-breaking tendency, he asked them in. He abundantly fed them. Meeting them as man to man he showed them the purpose of all such forested enclosures. He put them on his side, where in truth they naturally belonged—would not treat them as enemies or opposers. It was a triumph, not of personal magnetism —which would have been a transient effect—but of social reason. The result was the Woodcraft League, with its rapidly multiplying branches and its membership of more than eighty thousand. If the League, in the course of time, should fade into other forms of enjoyment of a nature-seeking sort, it will be because the impulse is not primarily gregarious. The best in nature is not to be taken herdwise, but men or boys may combine in groups to preserve and keep wild a woods-world that town life is progressively destroying. If only for this cause, all leagues of girls and boys—all camps and codes that arouse a dormant feeling for the out-of-doors—are worth maintaining.

However, apart from the future of the League itself,

its founder had ideas which are so specific and so clearly set forth that they are worth presenting as a part of his unique contribution. We find them well stated in "The Book of Woodcraft," which is also the eleventh edition of the "Birch-Bark Roll," which had previously been published yearly since 1902. In that year Seton founded the first band of Woodcraft Indians, and the varied themes of which he treats are all, as he himself says "merely parts of a scheme that I have always considered my life work, namely the development or revival of Woodcraft as a school for manhood." And that term he defines thus: "By Woodcraft I mean outdoor life in its broadest sense . . . the first of all the sciences. It was Woodcraft that made man out of brutish material, and Woodcraft in its highest form may save him from decay."

The detail and resourcefulness with which organizations, aims, arts, skills and appliances are handled in such a book do not concern us here. Enough to know that they are treated with understanding of a boy's mind as well as with expert woodsmanship, Indian lore, and the added powers of an artist, as in the designs for totems. What appeals to us now is the broad purpose under it all, which is expressed in the volume cited in this passage:

> That they may go forth with the seeing eye, the steady hand and muscles that fail not; and learn to know the pleasant ways of the woods, and be in all wise masters of themselves. That no manner of stress or ill-fortune or hardship or wound-

ing of the spirit may come, but they shall face it without flinching.

In a later edition of the "Birch-Bark Roll" (the Twentieth) we find the italicized saying, "*Woodcraft is recreation,*" and its subject-matter described as "something to do, something to think about, something to enjoy, something to remember in the woods, realizing all the time that manhood, not scholarship, is the aim of all true education." Womanhood as well, for the Roll is for girls as well—the Woodcraft League for Girls from twelve to eighteen, as for boys of the same ages. It engages their interest chiefly in the life of the camps and the woods, but recognizes that life in town demands a like alertness and science. Thus it assigns a value to such acts as looking both ways before crossing a street, knowing the signs on a lamppost, avoiding breathing through the mouth, especially when there is dust flying (a highly important branch of the modernized craft, since it is through dust that danger chiefly comes to civilized man, not through poisoned arrows). Further, and this is a pertinent point, the Birch-Bark Roll carries between its covers a brief dependable manual of edible and poisonous plants, of flowers, of trees, animal tracks, and birds, with illustrations. Many an adult with retarded development along this line, might profit by the woods lore so simply handled.

The founder of the League has been a student not merely of animal ways but of human instincts, recog-

nizing, as he says, "in these age-old inherited habits of the race, a weapon and a force of invincible power, never forgetting that instincts may go wrong and be a menace; also that to thwart or aim at crushing an instinct is courting disaster." He has wished to direct primal impulses toward recreation in natural ways so that they may result in the formation of health and of character. He has not aimed to make the organization which he leads a feeder for the army.

* * * * *

By way of contrast with what precedes, and has been accepted as the trend of this naturist's life-work, we may mention what is distinctly a man's book—"Arctic Prairies." In the pages of this volume the author meets stern realities of the Canadian Northwest with rugged realism. There is no touch of romanticism in the accounts of beasts, flies, rapids, Indians, dogs or men. The humors and hardships of a trip through and beyond the belt of Indian habitation are given as they come, in plain words based on a journal —the quotations from which, indeed, make the best things in the volume.

For the sake of the light it casts on an Indian's soul I will give this episode told to the author of "Arctic Prairies" by Thomas Anderson, a veteran officer of the Hudson's Bay Company whose unimpeachable face (as reproduced in the volume) bears a strong resemblance to that of Joseph Conrad. Omeegi, who, although old

and half-blind, had guided this officer through the last lap of a 1,200-mile journey in the snow, came, the next winter, to ask for a present—"a new shirt and a pair of pants," which is the usual outfit for a corpse in that remote region (Wayabimika).

> He explained that he was to die . . . that he would die 'when the sun rose on that island' (a week ahead. He got the clothes, though every one laughed at him. A week later he put on the new garments and said: 'Today I die when the sun is over that island!' He went out, looking at the sun from time to time, placidly smoking. When the sun got to the right place he came in, lay down by the fire, and in a few minutes he was dead.

So much for natural Northern man and his rapport with that which the many dread and resist with their last breathing. I have never read of a more direct unconfused surrender to that which is and must be. So Omeegi met Omega, the last letter in that short half-deciphered alphabet of human living.

*In the foregoing sketch a small part only of the literary output of our most prolific nature-writer has been noticed. It is enough to vindicate the authenticity of that writing from our present point of view, which is that of nature interpretation. Very little need be said here of his most recent and by far his most impressive single undertaking, the "Lives" (in eight volumes: Doubleday, Doran, 1929). It was not the fruit of the artistic-interpretive naturistic impulse and therefore does not fall within the direct line of our appraisals. It is a serious scientific study of the lives of our North American Game Animals, the result of thirty years of observation and research, and eight years of intensive work. It seems agreeably appropriate that the John Burroughs Medal (for the best contribution to natural history) should have gone to its author in 1928, and that the David Girou Elliot Medal for the best contribution in natural science is to be presented to him in 1930, at an occasion deferred from 1929, and determined upon by the National Academy of Sciences on the appearance of Volume IV of the "Lives."*

# MARY AUSTIN

ELSEWHERE I have answered the question put to me by a woman, why there are not more competent women naturists. Now it is time to explain why there are some; and, in passing, why one who is also a brilliant essayist and an intellectual person can be a naturist at all.

I find the clue not in a book which has come to stand for Mary Austin, as a sort of synonym for her out-of-door writing, but in one of her least known volumes, "The Flock." It is more than a clue. It is explicit, and worth quoting as a paragraph, intact:

> By two years of homesteading on the borders of Tejon, by fifteen beside the Long Trail where it spindles out through Inyo, by all the errands of necessity and desire that made me to know its moods and the calendar of its shrubs and skies, by the chances of Sierra holidays where there were always bells jangling behind us in the pines or flocks blethering before us in the meadows, by the riot of shearings, by the faint winy smell in the streets of certain of the towns of the San Joaquin that apprises of the yearly inturning of the wandering shepherds, I grew aware of all that you read here and of much beside.

"I grew aware," describes it. There is no other way. "Errands of necessity and desire . . . made me know its moods and the calendar of its shrubs and skies." Persistent study and enterprising research have made

good naturalists but they never made a naturist on God's earth. Both logic and imagination enter into scientific procedures but this kind of interpreter of a nature-world must "know its moods."

The book from which I quote is written lyrically and joyously. It is pleasant and illuminated reading; but its rewards are for the initiated, to whom content does not greatly matter, and who kindle quickly to the magic of mood.

But this magic in no way denies or distorts reality. For proof of this, read, if you like the second chapter of the book we just named: "The Sun in Aries"—of lambing and the ways of lambs and ewes. There is more pure authentic science of behavior in it than you will find in many pages of heavier reading. There is in this, as in every other chapter, true natural history of the sheep, good natural history of the herder, and a naturism of the human observer that lifts it out of the dull category of information. There is a realism that does not break our mood.

"Mood" again. Why stress it? Because it is a dominant causal contribution. It makes the meaning of things, in a sense that every naturist understands and every scientist, *qua scientist* does not. Without sentiment there is no meaning. Mood is the carrier and container of sentiment, in the true and original sense of the word. Thackeray said: "Without sentiment there would be no flavor in life at all"; but we must go farther and say that without sentiment there would be no

meaning in it. For meaning is value, not coercive logic, and not a state of hypnosis induced by facts.

This temper of mind—that makes values, makes meanings—appears plainly in a sentence that I shall quote from the earlier pages of the same book:

> All of the book that is mine is the temper of mind which makes it impossible that there should be any play not worth the candle.

There is gauntlet flung down. Any man, any woman, who cannot rise to that posture is in danger of defeat. And a posture it is, truly; but not a pose. By some deep law of our being we are obliged to assume an attitude . . . and make it good. What was the first vertebrate but a creature that took upon itself an inner stiffening against the crumpling pressures of the world? And the first man, what was he but the vertebrate who left off leaning on his knuckles and assumed an erect posture, a challenge to the earth?

And so, having found this temper of mind in Mary Austin, and having caught the human sense of it, we shall perceive it everywhere in her writing; but it may please us to follow it, next, in another kind of book—a difficult kind, in which many have tried and few have succeeded, have made literature. It is the "Trail Book." Disguised and segregated as "juvenile," it is likely to escape notice. "Juvenile" it is, in outward manner and appeal. It will hold a younger reader. But only a gifted child or a precocious one could grasp the inner drift of it. There

is an elemental force here that goes deeper than folk-tale form and myth construction. The ancient world is felt, the primitive world of man and mammoth. We do not merely learn about them. This is not merely a cleverly concocted story, as most juveniles are, and done for a child's amusement. The grip of the old lost life is upon it.

Such a book is not achieved by research. By imagination, yes: in a measure. By sympathy, more; but chiefly by insight. So it might have been, thinks the reader. So it must have been, says the man within us—the man who can drink up the racial past, a heady liquor. All is froth to him who cannot, the spoiled man, the over-civilized spirit. Froth and amusement, or at best a plausible picture, which he approves or opposes, but into which he cannot enter. "Trail Book" is more than a picture, as all creative work is more than a picture. It is something to live with, and through. Merely as literature, it ranks with Kipling's Jungle Books. Unlike them, it is relevant to our culture which, as it roots in American beginnings, takes up something of the local earth, of the indigenous life and feeling.

It takes a robust and resolute spirit to draw this life up into one, make it valid, oppose it to the pallid thought-life on which we are suckled. Mary Austin has it. "Trail Book" nourishes. What the juvenile section of our reading public gains the adult group loses if it fails to discover it—a book for boys, truly, and

girls, but for mature appreciation. So much for the book as bread. From another viewpoint, as interpretation of the lore of the Indians, we shall return to it later.

Suppose we plunge at once into an important work, a product of her mature genius, "The Land of Journey's Ending." From an Author's Preface we learn that it is a book of prophecy. Of course. No writing done in his or her proper mood, by a true naturist, could be anything else. All other writing would be a digression, on that author's part. And no matter what its pretence, or its subject matter, other nature-writing is spurious. So much for the first line of the Preface. At its end this author admits that she is also a prophet of human nature "which lives so much more by effects produced than by facts described." Right, again. There is your naturist. And, for failing to perceive that, you will see some nature men, such as Burroughs, diminished, and a host of others eliminated. They have attended only to facts; and human nature, duped for a while by their accuracy, rejects them in the end; and rightly.

In the body of the book you get at once the drive of that strong feeling for the land itself, in whatever guise, that is the urge of a true nature-writer. Even when we are viewing (in the first chapter) the first thrust northward, under Alcaráz, of the Spanish intruder, and thereafter the greedy and futile march of Coronado, we feel the spirit of this rugged land as a

thing greater and more lasting than the historical pageant. It is felt as personal, not geographical. It must be won, like a woman. In this respect the unlettered American pioneer was like the Amerind who preceded him. "Both of these married the land because they loved it, and afterward made it bear." And we are not permitted to miss the fact that "several generations of men wasted themselves upon it happily, without taking any measure of its vast material resources." There is a sentence to be underscored. In that happy lapse and suspension of our deadly modern sufficiency lies comfort for those whose heads reel with the whirl of harvesters and the hum of power-producing engines.

True, a traveler in this vast place feels, even from the train, relief and escape from over-crowding. He cannot believe that it can ever become a hog-wallow for competitive industries. But he cannot follow the flight of his eye to those distant boundaries—he cannot walk those mottled hills and lose himself in their scent and silence. He has not the leisure. He needs these pages. Therefore he is glad when, with a rush of poetic imagery the book lifts him off his feet and sets him on the "Wind's Trail," in the New Mexican highlands.

He is now in the second chapter. He expects a heightened language, does not confuse it with "fine writing"; for it emanates from the spirit of place, like the Rain-song of the Sia. It comes in vigorous meta-

phors, the language of chiaroscuro; or in the slower stroke of the simile:

> On the miraculous floor of the air the Rain stands upright between the mountains.
>
> East of the Rio Grande the junipers are small and widely interspersed among the green rosettes of the one-leaved pinon pines, with which the pale hills are spotted like an ocelot.

Here and there is a needed explication. An Easterner must be eased into this aspect of nature as a reader into some new dialect of which half the terms are unfamiliar:

> To most people a forest is a persisting communality of tree and plant life, thought of in collective terms as one thinks of a city. What you have here is a pine and another pine and another, mesquite and mesquite and mesquite, each inviolate in its circle of bare earth, bound together by not so much as the roots of grass. And to many people grass is as indispensable an index of fertility in the earth as long hair is of femininity in a woman. Actually, all that grass and other annual cover afford to the casual observer, is evidence of the quick, continuous rhythms of vegetating life.

This removes a barrier, a misunderstanding. It is psychological first aid to a man born and bred east of the *llano estacado.* But whether a novice or a seasoned trailsman one reads very heedfully here, knowing that, even when they explain, these are not "informational" pages, but carry meanings he cannot afford to miss. For, as was said before, all true nature writing is original writing, and therefore reveals value, reveals truth. Deeper and deeper, as one proceeds, he is led into an inner seeing; by word-clues, by wands snatched

from the Indian, by subduings of the clamant Western ego, by eye and hand contacts, by yieldings to the silent desert sense. One is ever on the edge of new-seeing.

It is not the land alone that is felt, as a physiographic unit. Not alone the winds, rain, clouds, mists, and air-rivers. You feel through quickened senses the sap in the shrubs and trees, the rhythm of the herbs, and its seeming suspension. Not "she feels," but you feel. If only half an initiate, but responsive, you are carried over into shared experience, are at one with this strange vegetation. But if not even half awakened —if perforce an outsider—surely any one may weigh and know the difference between this and an ephemeral writing that leads nowhere, that dabbles in surfaces.

We have felt the land, and its native moods. We have become intimates of an arid vegetation, felt its pulse, imagined its manward yearnings. And now, as we go deeper in this prophetic book we find ourselves in a third mode; we are seeing with man in his primitive form. We are sharing an Indian's approach to nature. Properly done—as it is done here—this is not a caprice, a fancy. It is not one among many possible choices. With the land duly felt, and the plant rightly sensed, it becomes the completion: the inevitable. Of this the book itself will convince you. And by that fact alone the book lifts itself above other contemporary writing, goes below current and accustomed insights, carves out and grips a new segment of the nature ex-

perience. It is a new wholeness. See how it stands apart:

—not aesthetic man, merely, appraising a world from which he has become detached and against which he stands opposed as critic;

—not inductive mind, with scientific procedures, explaining and exploring things that must presently be exploited;

—not emotional man, as poet, seeking in picture-patterns a literate enjoyment.

Something of all these, perhaps, but with another will, another center. It is the will for, or to, identification. Oneness. The self is to be made one with a profounder world. The sick conscious self is to be drawn both down and up into a valid unconscious one. There is health there. Man is felt as man-and-nature; no longer an ailing off-shoot, a detached product of greed and intellection.

It is easily possible that a reader who has, hitherto, looked with contempt upon all savage lore, regarding it as childish myth and fable, may change his view while under the influence of these pages. He will not be argued out of his old position. He will be caught by a new contagion. It will be that or nothing. A point gained by argument is seldom worth holding. The appeal is to common roots, to deep life sources. Here you have that appeal, made effective in sound writing.

But here is more than sound writing. Can a page

be both authentic and ecstatic? Apparently it can, with Mary Austin, and as one reads deeper and deeper into these chapters—as in the one titled "The Days of Our Ancients"—one finds everywhere the touch of that mood which Machen showed must be present if literature is to be pure and abiding: ecstasy. Behind it is sure knowledge of the ascertainable facts; they are always at command, not let loose to dominate and cripple the imagination. It is not only that an archaeologist's facts are made luminous to the eye of the mind. It is that and much more: the whole scene and scheme of it is pervaded by a powerful and sympathetic vision. The result is, not a book to stir us to a futile sympathy and a sentimental concern for vanished tribes or persons—as a romance is likely to do, with its dramatic excitement and special pleading—but to create in us a living picture, an experience of the past, a great slant-light upon our own present. For *Now* is nothing without perspective. It demands a large perspective, a deep background. And here pre-history is more pertinent than history; for in the hectic scenes which make up a political picture of civilized men there is no hint of our third mode—of man at one with nature. He has split off. He has forgotten. He has "improved." *That* is his civilization, his story of wars and greed, of convenience and luxury and disillusion. With all of earth's powers at his command he is drinking the dregs of sophistication. And so he needs renewal, an expe-

rience of nature and of nature-and-man. If any writing could give him such experience vicariously, it would be a book like this.

In 1924, when it appeared, one ought to have heard every one saying, "Have you read 'The Land of Journey's End'?" Our obsession about the novel as a means of communicating culture, prevented. However, the book goes on, after all that season's fiction has perished, and will be read as long as men are found who care to have the past rekindled, the Pit-houses rebuilt, the Cliff-dwellings repeopled.

Here, in these pages, a world-stage is revived. Here come the peaceable Pit-house people, with their light bows and deer-fleet runners. "As naked, as unalarmed as flocks of migrating birds, as unplunderable," they dig their sunken homes, as perfect as the cell of a bee, in the dry *abras* of the Southwest. To them, from the south, comes the town-builder, corn. They become the People of the Seed. They build better, for its protection. Thus evolve in succession the Small-house, the Cliff Dwelling and the Pueblo. Of the Pit-house all that remains is the *kiwa,* a place for religious seclusion which, with politics, men invented "because women shortsightedly failed to provide any place in the home where such instinctive male activities could go on."

Much is quotable, but rather than for logic and penetration I shall quote for enchantment. This passage has the quality of double exposure. You see at one seeing both the Now and the Then of the cliff

dwellings. With a quickened imagination you see "Such magic . . . thrown about this period, by the wild splendor of the many-colored cliffs from which the squared tops and ruined towers of the cliff villages peer down, that it is difficult to write it into any scheme of tribal evolution. Eagles mewing about the perilous footholds, great trees rooting where once the slender ladders clung. You walk in one of the winding canons of southern Utah or Colorado, threaded by a bright stream, half-smothered in choke-cherry and cottonwood, and suddenly, high and inaccessible in the canon wall, the sun picks out the little windows in the walls amid the smoke-blue shadows, and you brush your eyes once or twice to make sure you do not see half-naked men, deer- and antelope-laden, climbing up the banded cliffs, and sleek-haired women, bright with such colors as they knew how to wring out of herbs and berries, popping in and out of the T-shaped openings like parakeets."

The very next paragraph following this charming evocation begins, "Clear October afternoons, when the fleets of aspen, gold at the bottoms of the canons, set sail for the ruined balconies . . ." but I will not quote further.

What more can language yield, or what better? This is not sugared archaeology but true-seeing. Only an arid mind can insist on leaving all the breath of a living land out of the tale of things concealed there. And this breath pervades all of this book of man-and-na-

ture which, otherwise, might have been a monograph or a series of inanimate papers on the climatology and anthropology of the Southwest, so replete is it with sound observation.

That this writing is enhanced by such free-flowing qualities of style and by a pleasing play of fancy will in no way prejudice a well-informed reader, who will have known beforehand that what Mary Austin writes is dependable, even when charged with that enchantment which the land itself generates—the Middle Place, which is the "Land of Journey's Ending." Such a reader will merely think, as he reads delightedly, how fortunate it was that this author, while still in her prime, left that colony on the Pacific Coast where art begins to be a cult and took up her abode here. Where trails meet and ways converge, the path of the people; where tribes are born, cities arise and die, myths are preserved; where under the shadow of an encroaching and ruthless industrial world the ancient dances are still danced as if pagan Greece were alive again—here is the place for an author to live and write, who would tell of man in nature.

She tells of the Hohokum, and the Great-house culture of which they were the lords and builders; of how their clan dominated agricultural tribes that served the corn and the cotton, impressing on the latter their *noblesse,* but themselves passing. She tells how the gods withheld the rains, and how the corn

cities were plundered. Fear came with the Apaches. Whole cities lost their populations.

She tells how, "when the Small-house People had gone to look for their vanished rains, then came the Puebleños, down the Chama, already advanced in town-building"; of braided and interlocking tribal movements and cultures; of how the conquistadores invaded them, imposing the Cross, burning medicine men and stirring bloody retaliation; how, after a hundred years of this pressure the Puebleños still opposed with cunning resistance the thing Spain demanded, and even when conquered gave only lip-service to an imposed religion. Very boldly she relates, and very tellingly, how the Protestant missionary, with the Indian Bureau behind him, "has made a dull debasing smear over the lovely aesthetic culture of the Pueblos." Thus the spirit of man in nature becomes protagonist in a long drama of which the end is not yet visible. It is a pity that the obsessions of Christianity, and not its spirit, should forever mar and not mend its contacts with the primitive; but so it is, and both suffer.

The primitive is there. Its forms pass but its spirit persists. This enlightenment redeems it. Into the web of human existence it was wrought from the beginning. Into the web of imagination our mind receives it. And so it is not lost. It is saved to thought, and the book-of-saving is a prophecy. Such a book is the one we have been scanning. The claim made in Author's

Preface has been fulfilled, in ways here only hinted. Much depth is there for the plumbing, and a wide sweep of vision for our imagining. "What I would know," the author writes, "is the far journey's end of all these threads of human enterprise, and my sole purpose, besides the pleasure of playing with them, in showing you the many-colored skein of the past, limp in my hand, is that you may presently feel with me the pull of the shuttle that flies to the pattern's completion." Short of feeling that pull there is no true enlightenment.

From all this it follows that we have living at Santa Fé a naturist who has done what no other American nature-writer could do: revealed to us the spirit of the land, the spirit of the plant and the spirit of man in such *milieu* unfolding.

It required power to do this, and command of language. It required both gifts and sincerities. Not the romantic approach nor the so-called realist's; the naturist's, rather, which is different, comes by bent or endowment, matures by long schooling. No tyro may wear this mantle. It falls only on those who have been tried, on those who have walked often alone and yet —like the Indians, "our Ancients" here described—are "unlonely."

The work abides. From "The Land of Little Rain" to "The Land of Journey's Ending" is a long and honorable sheaf of books, all with a viable germ; not "descriptive writing." The arid hills, the herds, the dust,

the winds, the rain come alive in their pages. The plants and man take the trail together. The desert is tamed, and for its naming are plowed up our stiff vocabularies. Sown with Indian and Spanish words language flowers with fresh meaning—and let no reader condemn before he has savored for himself upon the arid land such name-signs as abra, sahuaro and potrero. But, chiefly, what lives in this work is its deep pervading insight, bred of breadth and sympathy. The point of view is not European, Anglo-Saxon or American. It is human. Wise folk will catch this deep contagion and value the writing. They will forget, perhaps, that it is the work of a woman; for in this field —this deep field of impersonal perception—there is no male or female bias. There is only the human spirit, true-seeing.

The primitive approach to nature can never—with excuse—be misconstrued again, since Mary Austin. A cold intellectual view of it becomes impossible, a romantic one unnecessary. Through the soil, the plants, the skies, the seasonal changes, through hardship, necessity, death and birth—how else?—we rise to its reality, and find ourselves on no superior platform, arrogating to ourselves a supreme insight. Our mature, our only sound view, must have shared the best of the Amerind's sense of his world, shared his rhythms; not descended from a great height to his humble level. But to come up, by every perceptive sense and with a quickened pulse through all its rhythms—this is the true

enlightenment, and here are books that embody it.

And now, must it surprise us to find that the mature view, won through long and unboastful threading of the earthways, accords with the views of the child and the Indian? Both are alive and valid profound seeing —the gift of inspired ones—supports them. Their "view" is their life, to destroy which is to commit a murder. It is Herod, not Christ, who slaughtered the children.

In myth and folk-tale Indian and child come together. Hence "The Trail Book" is rightly done for children; but not done in the "juvenile" manner. Those of us who have subsoiled our surface self and made depth may read its tales even more happily than if we were young; that is, with a joy of creative reading. Not every book can be read that way. This one can. It invites such reading.

Even more lately out (the imprint is for 1928) is a book of nature verse, also done for child and Indian. "The Children Sing in the Far West" is its title. It comes wisely and without pretension in this guise. Avoids probe and scalpel, avoids the hair-swung scales of appraisers. These are both "nature" songs and natural ones. Ease is in them. Often they surprise and enchant one. Let the severe and malignantly expert among critics be steered away from them, as from harebells, frail ferns and other cliff-natives. They are to bloom where they belong in mesa and canyon-bred consciousness. To the more discerning, to those whose

heads are clear and whose hearts are not envenomed, these young-minded songs are a relief and an assurance. To be wise, say they, is not to be unfeeling. To be learned and deep-versed in a lore of the land and its past is not to be bitten by a frost of intellectuality. And is not this, after all, the kernel of the wheat amid a chaff that the schools have piled like a mountain? Well, then, here is wheat, of forty years winnowing.

Verse, as such, is out of the province of this present study; but when Mark Van Doren, on reading these poems, thinks that their author ought to abandon other forms of literary expression for verse, and Arthur Davison Ficke finds in "At Carmel" and "In Papagueria" pure poetry—imagery created quite outside the poet's personality—we take notice. We should not like to have Mrs. Austin abandon all other forms of literary expression for verse; but we begin to know why we were surprised and enchanted when first we dipped into "The Children Sing." Just this quality pervades the collection. Here is relief from self-consciousness, from phrase-making and clever sophistication. Would you believe that a poem on "Homesickness" could be impersonal? Surely not: but you will find such a one in the group called "Songs of the Southwest." Others as good are scattered through the volume. It would be a pity to ignore, yet a folly to quote one's favorites. But I will quote "At Carmel," not as most favored but for its touch of nature feeling.

There are people go to Carmel
To see the blue bay pass
Through green wave to white foam
Like snow on new grass.
But I go to hear the auklets crying
Like dark glass on glass.

I go to hear the herons talk
The way that herons have, half asleep,
As they come in past Carmel bar
With a slow wing sleep;
To hear the wood teams jingling up from Sur,
And the contented blether of the Mission sheep.

There is a poet hid in every naturist, and if he or she does not make verse his main outlet it is because he senses a surer expression for his thought in prose. Yet the essence of that thought will always remain poetic, for *as thought* it is extra-logical; that is, beyond, and greater than the scope of logic. And so, still seeking channels, the thread and flow of it will run through every writing of the nature author, in some measure. Thus in "California,"[1] or as it was later named "The Land of the Sun" this thread appears constantly. This fact, with the intimate and authentic knowledge of the things described, lifts the book above the level of popular descriptive writing. It is, in one sense, a local theme with historic background and perspective. It does appeal to the general reader and can satisfy an eye and ear that crave direction. But it is somewhat more. The nature touch is upon it. The book aligns itself with that earlier work which made this author a name and is still of value: "The Land of Lit-

[1] First published by Adam and Charles Black, in London, in 1914. Afterwards, in 1926, by Houghton Mifflin.

tle Rain." There the touch of the land is felt more intensely as of—simply the land, not as California.

Of "The Land of Little Rain" I shall only say that the themes are local but the feeling universal. The air that blows over the mesa, here, is the air of all mesas: —"a sliding current of cooler air going down the face of the mountain of its own momentum, but not to disturb the silence of great space. . . . In quiet weather mesa days have no parallel for stillness."

Similarly you will find in the accounts of trails ("Water Trails of the Ceriso," in this same book) the mood of all trails, the signs that man makes, the clues the brute uses. You will get the feel and flutter of the mice and the burrowing owls—"thistle-down flights and pouncings" (when was an owl's strike better described?) and "the pin-point shriek of field mouse or kangaroo rat." You will get the outlook of fox and coyote, of stolid predatory badger and the hawk, his beneficiary; of the folk, white or red, who lean upon this land and have measurably taken on its color. "The Land of Little Rain" may have been eclipsed, it has not been effaced by the later writing. It is a permanent possession, not to be excluded from the lore of our arid lands and nature.

In "Lost Borders" you will find the same thread, the same sigh of the land, done in story. You will find it (as an Indian sees) in "The Basket Woman." Only in some more formal essays with a deliberate intellectual appeal will you be permitted to forget that Mary Austin is first and best a nature writer, and seer.

# FOREST MAN AS NATURIST

## I

### ISHI

JOHN BARTRAM, as I have told in my sketch, lay awake one summer night of 1743, in the forest, and heard primitive man sing his song to or of the spirit, unregarded. While the camp slept this Indian "sang in a solemn and harmonious manner, for seven or eight minutes, very different from the common Indian tune, from which I conjectured it to be a hymn to the Great Spirit as they express it."

I see much in this episode, because it conveys to us a direct impression of that lost unheeded thing, the soul of the savage as it could be when alone and in nature. In war or dispute or barter it might be a different thing. On display it would have another character, and still a different one when brooding on wrongs real or imagined. But here is that soul without an audience, without pretensions, conveying to us across two centuries its quality of priest and artist. The man is unknown, he is unnamed, he passes out of the picture like a gleam of firelight or the glow of an ember. But he

has left an impression. There was a person, like ourselves at our best.—But are we ourselves and at at our best when alone in the dark of the forest? If we are, then this page is pertinent, for we have the primal spirit in us, not as lust but as adoration.

In 1911, one hundred and sixty-eight years after the event recorded by John Bartram, a naked Indian, ill and starving, came out of the forests of Northern California and cast himself upon the mercy of the whites. He was the last of the Yahi, a hunting tribe that had made no compromise with civilization. He expected to be shot at sight, as his people had been, for two generations. It was his fate to fall into the hands of intelligent men, and for five years he was cared for by the State and studied—if we must use the word—not as a specimen but as a human being, under the auspices of the University of California. That a Stone Age savage should have survived to this late date and escaped all modifying contacts seems incredible. But we learn from the records made by Saxton Pope, his friend and companion during this period and up to his death at its close, that such was the case. That small remnant which the settlers left alive had eluded notice by living in the densest woods. Three were left when a party of surveyors discovered their camp and took their slender stores. Two of these died. Ishi was left, and cannot have thought his own life worth the saving.

Fed and befriended Ishi responded with all that he had to give. To Dr. Pope he gladly revealed all the

secrets of the craft of a bowman. For him he made arrows and bows and fashioned from obsidian and flint arrow-heads as fine as any that have been made on the continent. Every step in their manufacture he showed him. With him he hunted or shot at targets in the European way. The two talked of the ways of the woods and of our ways, that are so opposed to them. Ishi thought us foolish, as a race, for all our ingenious contrivances. He had many superstitions, and nothing that we rate as learning today. But he was, in relation to nature and to the woods as they were before we came, a self-sufficient human being. He had balance and resourcefulness equal to the needs of the life he was born to. More, he had delight in his art and pride in the skill of his hands. The flints he shaped were things of beauty. Beyond that he had a rapport with Things, that he could not well convey in words, but which was caught by his sympathetic companion. Dr. Pope has told us how he was transformed when he entered the woods, every sense quickened, and how his step became light as a snow-flake. In a flash Ishi became Forest Man, an embodiment of that ancient thing, happy and at home there, aware of much that escapes our senses. Here was the aboriginal "wild" man Henry Thoreau would like to have met in his walks. He was naïve, innocent of calculating conduct, and withal a person. His chief pleasure was his craft, and of it Pope wrote "To the last his heart was in the game." Indeed the breaking of a bow in his hand—a serious omen in

his tribe—contributed to his last illness. Not one bow, but two in succession shattered in his hand. Quite apart from the man's tribal beliefs about it, we can see that the sign of his power was broken—a harm to his unconscious self, through the imagination. "This and several other malign influences incident to our civilization, in his mind" were the contributing causes. His friend concludes the brief story:

> When he died and was cremated according to the custom of his people, we placed by his side some tobacco, ten pieces of dentalium shell, a little acorn meal, a bit of jerky, his fire sticks, a quiver full of arrows, and his bow.[1]

It was a kindly gesture, and whether or not it meant anything to the passing spirit of the Yahi, our spirit approves it. We are moved by it. And when we look in Ishi's death-mask in its dignity and repose we are aware that the man whose spirit shaped that mold was somehow at one with things-that-were before there was man, and will still be when man has finished.

It was not possible that Forest Man should persist any longer on this continent. It was inevitable that those tribes that compromised with our race and bargained for a mere existence should degenerate. Forest Man knew nature at its best as an individual. His deep-knowing came to him when alone on the trail, his illumination when fasting and looking for a heavenly sign. His vision was not communicable. Life was not—

[1] *Yahi Archery*, by Saxton Pope. University of California Publications, Berkeley, 1918.

whether in a man or a beast—something like property, maintained by economic system and social law, but a changeable cloak which he knew how to discard with fortitude.

## II

### OHIYESA

OHIYESA, in his oak-board cradle fell asleep in the warm shady woods. The "cradle," more like a pensile nest than a bed, had been hung upon a grape vine while Uncheedah cut fuel. To the bow of bent wood that protected his arms came a squirrel, finding it a convenient perch on which to nibble a hickory nut. This woke Ohiyesa, who protested, and the two had a noisy disputation, the squirrel having retreated to a neighboring bough. Birds often lit upon the pensile embroidered sack and the Dakota baby felt them friends. Afterwards, when he could talk, Uncheedah (grandmother) told him their names, or taught him to recognize their calls. In all ways that she knew she interpreted to him the things they saw or heard, and even taught him to respect the Great Mystery which they could not see. By the strained gruel from wild rice and pounded maize, to which was added the juice of dried venison that had been pounded to a flour, she kept him alive when his mother had died at the child's birth and there was no way for him to nurse. Having saved

his little body by death from neglect, she proceeded to build him a soul, according to the traditions of the Sioux. There can be no doubt that she was wiser than most women of her tribe. Because of this, and because of the debt he owed to her kindness and sagacity, Ohiyesa lived to record an articulate Indian's tribute to the integrity of a savage Indian's mode of life.

As a boy he lived in the Indian tepees of his tribe; moved when they moved, often carried, when still very young, between the lodgepoles that were bound to the backs of dogs for transportation—wet with them when the thirsty dogs ran into a stream. Across deep rivers he was carried on the shoulders of Uncheedah, strong swimmer that she was, though past sixty when her distrust of the round hide-boats made her put her powers to this test.

They hunted in season, for food, and in bad years were sometimes hungry. They harvested and stored wild rice from the lakes, gathered seeds and berries, edible and medicinal roots; collected the sap from maples, boiled it down and "sugared off." They were beset by hostile Ojibways, did scouting duty, went on campaigns of their own. It was a thoroughly savage, frequently dangerous and always untrammeled wild life, with no schooling other than that of the native red man, and few dealings with the whites, whose fire-arms they were glad to take in trade. His fire-water some took too, and it was the ruin of them. The wiser among them abstained. Such a one was the uncle of Ohiyesa,

Mysterious Medicine by name. It was he that taught the boy the lore of the forest animals, and by example as well as by precept taught him self-control, courage, sagacity in the presence of unforeseen surprises and dangers from human enemies or from beasts.

In time, the boy's father, after a long period spent as prisoner of war among the whites returned to him converted to the superiority of their ways. They had made him a convert to their faith. Ohiyesa was removed entirely from the loved wild life of the west and placed in school among white boys of his own age. With them he learned to express and to shape his thoughts in words that fitted a culture not his own. But with that achievement, and with such discipline as an American college can give, he remained a believer in the integrity of the Indian spirit and the poetry of the Indian mind. His own books are proof of it, and through them is diffused the convincing loyalty of his soul to its own upbringing, and a good forest life.

I do not feel that picture he has given us in "An Indian Boyhood" [1] is idealized. A selection has been made, doubtless, of those episodes and experiences that served to shape him and which impressed him most, as well as of those tales and teachings which he was expected to remember. Perhaps there were things which he wisely forgot. Certainly there are included in the picture accounts of savage warfare and of beliefs and

[1] New York, 1902, "Charles Eastman" (Ohiyesa) as author. McClure, Phillips & Co.

practices based on superstition. No Indian is presented as a saint. Many, however, are seen as brave—not merely with an animal courage—and noble according to a consistent code.

The code accepts inherited tribal hates. This, although repugnant to our own best enlightenment, is consistent with theirs; for how else could supreme courage be shown? The warrior's way of proving his manhood seems inseparable from the modes and morals of a forest race.

The code accepts the killing of animals for food. It does not, however, honor as motive a killing of birds and animals for sport. Is it certain that we have made so great an advance, in this point, beyond the code and practice of the Sioux? Ohiyesa was taught that animals were friends, and in the hunting songs they came to offer their bodies for the sustenance of his tribe. This kindly fiction must have spared an Indian boy the degradation that comes from a wanton destruction of life. Certainly the spirit manifest all through Ohiyesa's story is one of goodwill toward all the birds and beasts, combined, perhaps in a way we do not readily comprehend, with a delight in hunting. How could it be otherwise? The instinct of a hunter, he tells us, awoke in him at three years of age, when, toy bow and arrow in hand, he saw a bird pass overhead. At seven years he was expert, with a blunt arrow, in bringing down squirrels.

Education did not begin and end with the code of hunting, essential though it was to the life of the tribe.

Nature, at least in this boy's immediate circle, was studied for its own sake, seemingly. Uncheedah discussed with him the comparative wisdom of different birds, making him pass judgment on them. She in turn answered all his queries except those which "must be answered by a man." She knew the herbs that were good for medicine as well as those that were food. From her he learned that there are many secrets which the Great Mystery will disclose only to the worthy. "Only those who seek him fasting and in solitude will receive his signs." As she had done with her own sons, so she did with this foster grand-child. At the age of eight she had him sacrifice to the Great Mystery his best-loved possession, and it was a real sacrifice, for the best-loved object was a faithful hunting-dog.

Nature and religion went hand in hand with Uncheedah, but with Mysterious Medicine, the boy's uncle, there seems to have been besides that a dispassionate interest allied to what with us is called science, and a resentment at any misrepresentation of natural facts. However, so far as Ohiyesa's education was concerned, the old man's nature lore had a practical purpose. The boy must learn to be observant. He must know how to approach every beast that hunts or is hunted; must know that there are fish in a lake, not by sight, but by signs, and by the behavior of fish-eating birds. In all matters pertaining to a man's sight and a man's aggressive or self-protective acts Mysterious Medicine was his mentor.

Uncheedah made the major impression. It was she who molded his mind from the ages of one to seven. In these years, we know now, a soul is made. From her wise individual and tribal wisdom it took the stamp of reverence, of belief in the good which is not contrary to but according to nature. Therefore when Ohiyesa came to write of "The Soul of the Indian," it was hers that informed him.

"The Soul of the Indian" is an important document. Written in grave, restrained English, without bitterness or unfairness, it strips away the veil of self-complacency that so often obscures a white man's view of his own culture in relation to the life he displaces. Necessarily a defense of the red man's code of morals, it is also an interpretation of forest man, of the spirit of man in nature. That spirit it finds ingenuous, yet profound in its intuitions, and therefore worthy. A fair reader concedes that worth because he feels it in the author. Cradled in the woods, familiar from birth with its sounds and lights and shadows, but no less with its struggle for life, its hungers and perils, Ohiyesa emerged in youth to take a white man's education. It schooled his mind but did not change his spirit. Indelibly impressed upon his inmost being was the red man's feeling for the communal good in nature and of responsibility toward the "Great Mystery" which controls all living creatures. What Ishi could not have said, wanting words, Ohiyesa made clearly articulate, in a book of nature faith, any page of which is quotable. Two

passages will suffice, and those who wish to know the fuller detail may go to the original.[2]

> The worship of the "Great Mystery" was silent, solitary, free from all self-seeking. It was silent, because all speech is necessarily feeble and imperfect. . . . It was solitary, because they believed that He is nearer to us in solitude, and there were no priests authorized to come between a man and his Maker. None might exhort or confess or in any way meddle with the religious experience of another. Among us all men were created sons of God and stood erect, as conscious of their divinity. Our faith might not be formulated in creeds, nor forced on any who were unwilling to receive it; hence there was no preaching, proselyting or persecution, neither were there any scoffers or atheists.
>
> Long before I ever heard of Christ, or saw a white man, I had learned from an untutored woman the essence of morality. With the help of dear Nature herself she taught me things simple but of mighty import. I knew God. I perceived what goodness is. I saw and loved what is really beautiful. Civilization has not taught me anything better.

It is fitting to end with this tribute to Uncheedah, a true nature woman who, at sixty years, still lithe and wise and resourceful brought to her charge an immortal youth of the spirit, her best gift to Ohiyesa.

## III

### GAWASO WANNEH

HIS parents and grandparents did not live in movable lodges. They were not subject to night attacks by the Ojibways, nor did they live in strained re-

[2] "The Soul of the Indian," Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa). Boston, 1911 (Houghton Mifflin).

lations with the white men who had come to dominate the land. They had fitted easily into the ways of a civilization which they perceived it to be useless to resist; the more easily, perhaps, because they themselves had had a league and a government of great power and widespread influence. Their leader Hiawatha, and Je-gon-sa-seh his friend, known as the "Mother of Nations," with other wise and powerful persons had founded the Iroquois League of Peace. Gawaso Wanneh, through his grandfather's mother, was a direct descendant of Je-gon-sa-seh and had often heard of her, and of Hiawatha the lawgiver. His parents and grandparents lent their lives easily to the ways of order, thrift and kindliness. The grandfather, although brought up in the woods ways, had learned to be a blacksmith, a surveyor, a farmer and a musician.

They lived in a great house on the Cat-ta-raugus, and from it the boy would issue forth by day to fish and to "hunt for bear," or to try to shoot an eagle, to range the woods and swim in the creek. But at night, after a bounteous supper the little folk of the great house "would gather about the great yawning fireplace and say 'Grandfather, tell us a story.' Grandfather would tell a wonder tale of long ago, and then all the little folk would kiss him and go to bed." So he tells us in his book of tales called "Skunny Wundy." Or, there would be a visitor, an old Indian from up the valley and he would be called upon for the same service. They called him "Uncle," as all old men of the tribe

expected to be called, and he readily responded with a tale of birds, if the visitor was Shongo, or about Jungies and magic if Two Guns was the guest. And Chief Blacksnake told stories about boys who went hunting and shot mighty monsters. Many of these tales are retold in "Skunny Wundy" and the later volume, "Rumbling Wings."

Gawaso Wanneh tells us that as he looks back on these scenes, he thinks of them as "enchanted days." We can well believe it. And it is well for us to know that the men of the Seneca tribe were able not merely to adjust themselves to great changes in the world they formerly dominated, but to throw the spell of happiness and innocent enchantment about the lives of their sons.

And so he gives us these tales, not claiming for them any profound or cryptic meaning, but because "it is a shame to hide them away." And in the "Indian How Book" he shows us how the American red men devised means for making all kinds of things that come into our youthful hands "ready-made." It is a wholesome kind of knowledge, no matter whether we use it or not, and the reading brings us closer to the world we know as "nature," where man worked so skilfully with his natural hands. It is significant that in the first chapter of the "Indian How Book" the author remarks "Now, we, too, are beginning to love the forest and the streams . . . we are learning how to camp, how to find food in the forest and how to find healing leaves and herbs. The way of the red man is becoming our way" . . .

which reminds us that there is a *why* as well as a *how,* in all these things.

In civil life Gawaso Wanneh is Arthur C. Parker, anthropologist and director of the Metropolitan Museum at Rochester, and the author of many learned monographs available only in reference libraries. He is himself a chief of the Senecas and received his name when adopted into the clan of the bears.

## IV

### NATURE IN INDIAN FOLK TALES

SMOKY DAY, the old story teller, the "schoolmaster of the woods," tells the little people of the village, who have gathered to hear him, that these stories for which they ask "teach us the way of life." And perhaps the best clue to his meaning, and to that approach to nature which Indian and white man alike can comprehend, is found in the words put in the mouth of Smoky Day as he begins a night's entertainment. I quote from "Wigwam Evenings," a book of folk tales retold by Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa) and Elaine Goodale Eastman:

> In many of the stories the people have a common language, which now the Great Mystery has taken away from us, and has put a barrier between us and them, so that we can no longer converse together and understand the speech of the animal people.

> Observe, further, that silence is greater than speech. This is why we honor the animals, who are more silent than man, and we reverence the trees and rocks, where the Great Mystery lives undisturbed, in a peace that is never broken.

If we were to read no further than that we might well understand what it is that the first real American nature men felt about the world-life about them, and what they tried to convey in their fireside tales; the more thoughtful, the wiser souls among them. Silence was greater than speech: yes, but not an empty silence. These men were susceptible to the long slow wisdom of the woods, that never hastens, measures its alphabet by dotted years and its periods by ages.

Much of the old wisdom, they felt, was hidden in the ways of the wood-folk; and in this, our science supports them. But we search for it, since Huxley and Darwin, chiefly in the anatomy of all creatures; they seek it in temperament and behaviors. What an animal is and does, interests them, not its structural relations. Also they are inclined to see in animal life what Mrs. Austin describes as "humorous and satirical reflections of humanism." Where they are serious, their vein appears either moral or poetic.

Smoky Day's stories commonly end, like Aesop's, in a moral. Thus the mouse overcomes the buffalo (by lodging in its ear) but is over-inflated by its success and presently falls a victim to the fox. Moral: "If you are proud and selfish you will lose all in the end."

Smoky Day has not heard that it is poor art to attach a lesson to a story.

When Arthur C. Parker (Gawaso Wanneh) re-tells the folk-stories of the Seneca Iroquois he does it, as he himself says in a preface to "Rumbling Wings," in "the story-book language of this age, yet retaining the distinctive pattern of old." In other words he conceals the moral, if any, and brings out a highly poetized and imaginative fiction. So well does he do this that when we first dip into the volume and read "Hummocks of Sedge," we are incredulous. We cannot believe that this tale of the conquest of the mosquitoes—fancifully depicted here as "the flying notes of the witches"—by oil, belongs among Amerind legends. However, as we go deeper into the volume we feel not merely the pattern but the touch of an indigenous nature lore.

Some of the tales are very charming. They are extremely well told, from any viewpoint, and they are satisfying. Admirers of the waxwing will feel a real relief at finding an adequate folk-tale to account for the bright red waxen tips of the secondary flight-feathers on this bird. They want no "scientific" explanation. Here is a tale that does it and, at the same time, conveys something of that impalpable charm and nature-spirit which the waxwing's plumage seems designed to embody and express. The bird, as it happens, is almost voiceless (many adept field men cannot hear it at all, so high is the voice pitched), but some unknown red man of

the forest, seeing it and brooding upon it, heard the voice of Ra-wen-io (who made all things and made them well) saying to the soft-hued creature that had healed his thorn-torn cheek by the pressure of its wing.

> My blood-drops shall congeal upon your feathers and become as wax. This shall ever remind all my creatures that Ra-wen-io does not forget his friends.

But in another tale, the "Teardrop of Ra-wen-io," we have a hint that goes farther than responsiveness to beauty—persuades us that the red man may have been a man of peace, at heart. For arrows and spears, in this tale, are said to be "nothing but chips from the blood of the Bad Mind," which turned to flint as they fell from his heart when conquered Good Mind. And Flaming Dart, who is the war-maker, dies in the end because he makes war upon himself.

In "The Maize Maiden," corn is a celestial gift, which only the shiftless and bad-hearted despise. Personified in her, food comes to the humblest-hearted person in the tribe and is spurned only by a violent and evil man. The tale is beautifully told and its moral—for there is one—diffused all through it, and even stated at the close; but so vivid is the picture that no reader resents it or feels the spell in any way diminished. Here ethics and poetry perfectly blend.

Many of the tales are of pure magic. They teach neither nature, in a realistic sense, nor religion, but convey the feeling for wonder and mysterious medicine

that is so deeply rooted in the Indian soul. To ignore them would be to neglect what gives color and charm to all this lore of the forest Americans as the flash of a tanager gives zest to a walk in the woods.

One cannot do better than to close this slight sketch of our native forest men as naturists with a quotation from "The Indian How Book"—that extremely interesting section of it which deals with *The Indian Himself:*

Indians ponder much upon the wonders of nature, they think of the sky with its ever-shifting, fleeting clouds, they dream over the changing lights and shades, the glow of color at dawn and sunset, and they watch with eager eyes the twinkling of the stars. To them it is all very wonderful, and so they search the sky for some solution of its mysteries.

To them Earth is the Great Mother, the Sun is the Father of life, the Moon is Grandmother, the stars are celestial souls that shine to guide earthly wayfarers, to inspire and protect mankind. Little wonder, then, the Indian expresses his awe of nature in everything he says.

To talk the Indian way one must think as the Indian thought—not in words but in terms of comparison, in fitting pictures, and with a real love for the world of nature. Only one who felt the tingle of life, fresh blown from the lips of the Mighty Manitou, could sing as the red man did of the moon:

> The baby moon, a canoe—a papoose canoe, sails and sails in the Indian West.
>
> A ring of silver foxes, a mist of silver foxes, sit and sit around the Indian moon.
>
> One yellow star for a runner, and rows of blue stars for more runners keep a line of watchers.
>
> O foxes, baby moon, runners—you are the panel of memory, fire-white, writing to-night of Red Man's dreams. . . .

In the end it will be discovered that to talk "the Indian way" one must have an imagination clarified—or shall we say *mystified,* by nature, must think in terms of pictures and comparisons, must develop a terse expression of logical argument, and must know how to cover stinging words with a coat of nectar. At the same time there must be no affectation, no flowery language, and nothing complex. The auditor must hear and understand and picture in his mind what you have meant that he should.

THE END

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